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AUTHOR Cregier, Don M.
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ABSTRACT

A one-semester undergraduate course which introduces British Victorian culture and society through the examination of ten novels is outlined. The guide is presented in six parts. Part I describes objectives, methods, and evaluation. The course uses the novel as the principal medium for interpreting the institutions, movements, ideas, and personalities of the period. Students meet once a week for lecture/group discussions and once every two weeks for individual interviews with the instructor. The interviews function as oral examinations and tutorials. In addition to responding to study questions, students keep a log in which they write random ideas and observations of their readings. The final grade of the three-credit course consists of group discussions, tutorials, midterm and final examinations, and the log. Part II describes course materials. Novels include "Tom Brown's School Days" (Hughes), "Oliver Twist" and "Hard Times" (Dickens), "Mary Barton" (Gaskell), "The Way of All Flesh" (Butler), "Jude the Obscure" (Hardy), "The Prime Minister" (Trollope), "The Secret Agent" (Conrad), "New Grub Street" (Gissing), "A Man of Property" (Galsworthy), and "Ann Veronica" (Wells). A list of audiovisual aids is also included. Part III contains briefings for each novel which include a biographical note about the author, a commentary on the novel's publication history, author's intent, critical reaction, an outline and analysis of the book, recommended background readings, and study questions. Part IV provides abstracts of twelve lectures and Parts V and VI contain a selected bibliography and a list of twenty additional novels. (KC)

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NOVEL EXPOSURES:
A VICTORIAN STUDIES COURSE FEATURING CONTEMPORARY NOVELS

by Don M. Cregier
Associate Professor of History
University of Prince Edward Island

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Suggestions from readers for improving the methodology and contents of this model course will be gratefully received. Please address the author at the Department of History, University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, Canada, C1A 4P3.

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PART I. FORMAT OF THE COURSE.

A. Description and Objectives.

This one-semester course is an introduction to British society and culture during the "Victorian years" between Waterloo and the First World War. It uses the contemporary novel as the principal medium for interpreting the mood and spirit of this dynamic era, one which also focuses upon many of the institutions, movements, ideas, and noted personalities of the period.

B. Methods.

The course combines elements of the lecture, group discussion, tutorial, and independent study methods of teaching and learning.

Completion of the course earns students the regular three credit hours, but there is only one required class meeting each week. This flexible meeting, of one to two hours, is devoted largely to a background lecture on one of the assigned novels; but it may be, and usually is, supplemented by discussions elicited by the instructor's remarks.

For example, after the lecture on Tom Brown's School Days there may be an extended colloquy in which the nineteenth century English "public" school is compared to the grammar and charity schools of the same era and to modern state schools. During the class discussions the instructor may elaborate on points mentioned only briefly in the prepared lecture, e.g. the food and living quarters of public school pupils, the incidence of homosexuality at these schools, the importance of games in the school ethos, and the social and economic characteristics of the pupils' families.

In addition to their attendance at and participation in the weekly group meeting, students must arrange for a series of one-to-one interviews with the instructor, spaced about two weeks apart.

These interviews, at which ordinarily two novels are discussed, are oral examinations as well as tutorials. Students are requested to grade their performance during each of these encounters, and this self-mark is taken into consideration in my evaluation of their work. (My experience has been that most students tend to undergrade themselves in this situation.)

Another feature of the course is the notebook, or log, of their readings that students must keep. Besides responding to prepared questions on each book (which assist them in organizing their thoughts for the tutorials), they are urged to jot down random ideas and observations that occur to them while reading. Although often, unfortunately, a rather perfunctory exercise, ideally--and in some instances actually--the log can be a thoughtful dialogue between the student and the author of the novel.

C. Evaluation.

Students are informed at the start of the course that their final grade will be derived from four separate components that will have maximum point values totaling 100. These are group discussion (up to 10 points), tutorials (up to 40 points), mid-course examination (up to 20 points), and final examination (up to 30 points).

In addition, there is a fifth component, the log, that will have a floating value. If the log is not submitted at the end of the course, there will be a penalty of 5 grade points. On the other hand, a log that is exceptionally detailed, insightful, or creative will be rewarded by up to 5 extra grade points.

In an actual case, a student earned 7 discussion points, 32 tutorial points, 14.5 mid-course examination points, and 18 final examination points. His course grade, before the log was evaluated, was 71.5. However, his log was particularly mature and original, so that he was given 4.5 extra points, increasing his grade to 76.

It was noted that students self-grade their tutorials, and they may also self-grade their performance in other course components. It is made clear that the self-grades are intended to be advisory only, and that the instructor will use them together with other evidence of the student's accomplishment and progress in evaluating his work.

PART II. COURSE MATERIALS.

A. Requisitions.

Students are requested to buy 10 (of a possible 12) paperbound novels and a paperbound book of background essays. These books average about $1.75 (more in Canada). Students who buy all the books must spend about $20.00. Although students are urged to buy their own copies of the books so that they may freely mark them up, many share books or borrow from the university library. I usually recommend to the university bookstore the least expensive available paperbound edition of each novel.

Students must also equip themselves with a large notebook for their log, and are urged to buy a paperbound dictionary in order to reduce spelling errors in written work. The finished log may be either typewritten (preferred) or neatly handwritten.

B. The Books.

1. Background Essays.

The book of essays is intended to provide connecting links between the novels and to supplement the lectures and duplicated handouts. I have used several books of readings, none entirely satisfactory.

The one I like best is Christopher Harvie, Graham Martin, and Adam Scharf, eds., Industrialisation and Culture 1830-1914, published by the (British) Macmillan Company for the Open University. This 446-page book contains much interesting contemporary material, visual as well as written, tied together by the editors' explanatory notes. Unfortunately the anthology is being dropped from the Macmillan trade list and soon will be out of print in North America.

My second choice is Dutton's Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians, which contains the transcripts of a series of B.B.C. Third Programme radio talks made in 1947 by G.M. Trevelyan, Harold Laski, J. Bronowski, Bertrand Russell, and many other commentators of equal eminence. These erudite but readable essays, although lacking the contemporaniety of much of the material in Industrialisation and Culture, are quite successful in evoking the Victorian era. The book has 445 pages and is still in print.

Somewhat different but also recommended is Richard D. Altick, Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature (Norton, 338 pp.). The author has written a textbook rather than compiled an anthology, but unlike the other two books this one refers directly to scenes and characters in the selected--as well as many other--Victorian novels. If not assigned to students for background reading, this text may be fruitfully drawn upon by the instructor when preparing lectures and handouts.

2. The Novels.

Students are expected to read 10 of 12 recommended novels, all available in paperbound editions. The novels are treated in the course, and are described below, in the approximate chronological order of the plots.

a. Thomas Hughes, Tom Brown's School Days (1830s). This novel recounts the experiences of a squire's son at an English "public" school, actually an expensive private school for the training of future members of the Victorian governing class. Based on the author's own school days, it gives a good--though very partial--interpretation of the ideas of the much-admired Thomas Arnold, who more than anyone else reconstructed English secondary education in the nineteenth century.

b. Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist (1830s). In this novel we are confronted by the people at the other end of the social ladder from the Victorian squirearchy: the poor and the criminal underworld. This is an exciting, vividly written story with many colorful characters.

c. Elizabeth C. Gaskell, Mary Barton (late 1830s/early 1840s). This novel focuses on the bitter class conflict of early Victorian Britain, with emphasis on the trade union movement and the lives of the industrial working class. There is an elaborate, complicated plot--a characteristic of Victorian novels--set in a period of industrial depression and strife, the "Hungry Forties."

d. Charles Dickens, Hard Times (early 1850s). Another powerful novel by the most widely read Victorian author, this one sharply critical of middle class industrialists and businessmen. The "Manchester school" of economic thought and the politico-philosophical system of Utilitarianism are ruthlessly laid bare. One of the principal characters, Gradgrind, has become synonomous with the hard-hearted, mean-spirited aspect of Victorian life.

e. Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh (about 1835-1865). Another autobiographical novel, this is a brilliant attack on Victorian prudery, smugness, and hypocrisy, with special attention to the eternal generation gap. The chief characters, Theobald and Christina Pontifex (actually the author's own parents), considered to be among the most disagreeable in English fiction, are lovingly rendered.

f. Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (1860s). There are several themes to this complex and beautifully written novel, including the difficulty of breaking through the Victorian class barriers, the conflict between flesh and spirit, and the impact of luck--especially bad luck--upon people's lives. A realistic story with a tragic ending.

g. Anthony Trollope, The Prime Minister (about 1874). This novel takes us far from the poor and frustrated like Jude the Obscure and into the great world of the mid-Victorian aristocracy and upper middle class. It is a novel of manners and character, with a political theme, intricately plotted and deftly written. Part of the "Palliser series" of Trollope novels that has been televised by the B.B.C.

h. Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent (1886). Where The Prime Minister showed us the political maneuvers of cabinet ministers and the schemes of Members of Parliament and newspaper editors, this book is about international conspiracy, espionage, counterspys, and the plotting of revolution. The subject is anarchism, which in the Victorian era was a scare-word like twentieth century Communism. The plot swings back and forth from a detective thriller to a study of personalities under stress.

i. George Gissing, New Grub Street (1882-1886). This scathing novel introduces us to the ethos of late Victorian journalism and literature, with its intense competition, jealousies, skulduggery, success--and failure. As in real life, bad men win and good ones lose. Like many other titles in this course, the book draws upon the author's personal experiences.

j. John Galsworthy, A Man of Property (1886-1887). This famous novel stresses the conflict between the Victorian ethic of power allied to property, and the two counter-ethics that were emerging toward the end of Victoria's reign: the integrity of the artist and women's liberation. Part of the Forsyte Saga, a series of five Galsworthy novels televised by the B.B.C. in the late 1960s.

k. H.G. Wells, Ann Veronica (about 1908). This novel is a character study of the late Victorian and Edwardian liberated woman, usually--as in this instance--a middle class girl with career aspirations and a strong desire for sexual freedom. We also become acquainted with the new subculture of suburbia, the suffragette movement, and the religion of science that was supplanting orthodox Christianity at the turn of the century.

1. H.G. Wells, The New Machiavelli (early 1900s). This is a novel of Edwardian politics and political ideas, which depicts the attempts of the social reformers known as Fabians to infiltrate and control political life behind the scenes in the decades before the First World War. Wells belonged to the Fabian Society and knew all the leading spirits of the group, including Sidney and Beatrice Webb who figure--suitably disguised--as characters in this book.

C. Audio-Visual Enrichment.

Although I do not use them in my course, cassette and video tapes and films can enrich the reading of these Victorian novels. Class time may be scheduled for audio-visual programs, or--if there are facilities--the tapes and films may be auditioned by students in their own time.

Many of these novels have been adapted to film or television, and some of the films and videotapes may be rented. There is also a good choice of cassette recordings of readings from the novels, critical discussions of them, and treatments of related themes. Although some of these interpretations are more appropriate for courses in literary criticism or comparative literature, others are suitable for a history course.

There are numerous catalogs of audio-visual course supplements. Here is a random selection from my files, with examples of programs:

1. Audio Text Cassette Reference Catalog. North Hollywood, California: Center for Cassette Studies, 1975, supplement 1976.
    a. "Charles Dickens: Man and Author." 27-minute discussion by Mabel Morris and Jacques Barzun.
    b. "The Way of All Flesh." 55-minute dramatization.
    c. "Victorian Child-Rearing." 30-minute talk by Prof. Michael Goldberg of the University of British Columbia.
    d. "Victorian Education." 30-minute talk by Anthony King of Essex University.
2. Audiotape Catalogue. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Learning Systems, 1976.
    a. "Disraeli and Gladstone." 30-minute talk by Robert Blake, historian and biographer.

3. Open University Multi-Media Material. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
    a. "Victorian Novels as Historical Evidence." 20-minute cassette tape which focuses on Disraeli's Sybil, Dickens's Hard Times, and Mrs. Gaskell's North and South.
    b. "Chartist Studies." 20-minute cassette tape recording a talk by Asa Briggs.
    c. "Striking Times." 20-minute cassette tape reconstructing the Preston textile workers' strike of 1853-4. Includes transcripts of contemporary newspaper articles, speeches, ballads, and comments by Dickens.
    d. "The Small Household." 20-minute series of interviews with Edwardian domestic servants. Available in film or cassette tape.
    e. "Science and Victorian Society." 25-minute film examining the impact of evolutionary theories on Victorian society. There are extracts from Gissing, Wells, and other writers describing Victorian controversies over science and religion.
4. Learning Concepts Multi Media Catalogue. Stratford, Ontario: Scholar's Choice Ltd., 1976-7.
    a. "The Victorian Era." 50-minute cassette and film strips. Uses contemporary drawings and photographs and correlated narration to examine political, social, and economic developments.
    b. "The Industrial Revolution." 50-minute cassette and film strips.

See also the article by Clara I. Gandy, "Audio-Visual Aids for English History since 1750: A Critical Review," The History Teacher, X (November 1976), 21-58.

PART III. DUPLICATED HANDOUTS.

A. Contents.

Duplicated "briefings" of 2-4 pages each are circulated the week before the lecture on each novel. Each briefing contains a biographical note about the author; a commentary on the novel's publication history, the author's intent in writing the book, and the reaction of critics; an outline and analysis of the plot; a descriptive list of the principal characters; recommended background reading; and a series of questions to stimulate thinking before and during the tutorial. (These questions, or adaptations of them, may also be used for the mid-course and final examinations.)

B. Briefings of the Twelve Novels.

1. Tom Brown's School Days.

a. The Author.

Thomas Hughes (1822-1896) was a lawyer by profession who was involved most of his life in social reform causes, including Christian socialism, trade unionism, and the workers' education movement. He dabbled, not too successfully, in politics as a Radical, being briefly a Member of Parliament. Hughes served on a royal commission and toward the end of his life was a county court judge. One of his projects, an expensive failure, was a communal settlement in the American state of Tennessee for "grown-up Tom Browns." Hughes wrote several inspirational biographies and novels, but the only one that is still read is the autobiographical Tom Brown's School Days.

b. The Book.

Hughes wrote Tom Brown's School Days, based upon his own life and school experiences, to entertain and edify his son who was about to go off to school himself. The book was first published in 1858 and soon became a best-seller. In the words of Charles Kingsley, a friend of Hughes and a fellow novelist, "from everyone, from the fine lady on her throne, to the red-coat on his cock-horse, and the school boy on his form . . . I have heard but one word, and that is, that it is the jolliest book they have ever read." Tom Brown has been republished in scores of editions in many languages and has helped to create the popular image of the English "public" school.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The story is a simple narrative, interspersed with brief moralizing lectures by the author, of the life of an upper class schoolboy at Rugby School during the headmastership of Thomas Arnold in the 1830s.

After a brief look at Tom Brown's family, his ancestral home in Berkshire west of London, and his boyhood as a squire's son, the story moves to Rugby School, located in the town of the same name about 75 miles northwest of London. Here we follow Tom's initiation into school life, the development of his friendship with fellow-student "Scud" East, and his various trials and adventures, until a crisis develops in which Tom may be sent home for bad behavior. The author shows how Headmaster Arnold's system of making big boys responsible for smaller ones saves Tom by forcing him to become self-disciplined in order to set an example for his protégé, George Arthur.

At the end of the book Tom has become head boy and captain of the cricket team and is about to leave for Oxford University to continue his education. In an epilogue he returns to Rugby following the death of Arnold to mourn his "old Master."

d. Principal Characters.

Squire Brown, lord of the manor in the White Horse Vale, present head of an old Berkshire gentry family, father of

Tom Brown, the hero of the novel.

Old Benjy, an elderly servant of the Browns, Tom's first "tutor."

Harry "Scud" East, a Rugby schoolboy, Tom's best friend at the school.

"Old Brooke" and "Young Brooke," brothers, top boys at Rugby during Tom's first years there.

Thomas Arnold, "The Doctor," headmaster of Rugby.

Flashman, a school bully.

"Tadpole" Hall, a schoolboy.

"Mucker" Diggs, an eccentric fifth-former.

George Arthur, a new boy.

"Madman" Martin, a schoolboy naturalist.

"Slogger" Williams, "king of the fourth form."

A Young Master, one of Arnold's assistants.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

Thomas W. Bamford, Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys' Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present (London, 1967).

Asa Briggs, Victorian People: Some Reassessments of People, Institutions, Ideas, and Events, 1851-1867 (London, 1954), ch. VI on Thomas Hughes.

Lytton Strachey, Eminent Victorians (London, 1928), section on Thomas Arnold.

Meriol Trevor, The Arnolds: Thomas Arnold and His Family (London, 1973).

Norman Wymer, Dr. Arnold of Rugby (London, 1953).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) Describe and evaluate Dr. Arnold's educational philosophy. How much of it is still relevant in our own time?

(2) Why was a "public" school education useful to a generation of imperial administrators? Would it be adequate today?

(3) Sports, a part of the informal curriculum at the public schools, were more important to most of the students than the classroom subjects. What educational values were imparted by the games?

(4) It is clear that religion was a meaningful part of the students' lives at the public schools. What was the essence of this "muscular Christianity" taught by Arnold and accepted by most of his charges?

(5) Some modern readers find the character of the bully Flashman more human and likeable than the characters of Brown, East, etc., whom the author Hughes obviously prefers. (A series of adventure novels has been written about Flashman by a modern writer.) What is your reaction to Flashman?

2. Oliver Twist.

a. The Author.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is usually rated the foremost Victorian novelist, and certainly was one of the most productive and widely read. His family was lower middle class, but because of his father's bad luck his childhood was spent in near poverty. Dickens had little formal education, and for a short time had to work in a factory. After being employed as a lawyer's clerk, young Dickens became a police court reporter and later a Parliamentary correspondent. His earliest fictional pieces were brief newspaper sketches based upon his journalistic experiences. His first literary success was The Pickwick Papers (1836), which, like his later novels, was originally serialized in a periodical. By 1845, Dickens was a "best seller" and on his way to being a rich man. Among his most successful novels were Oliver Twist and Hard Times, which we are reading in this course.

Dickens saw himself as a social reformer and champion of the underprivileged, who used fiction to illustrate social problems to the middle class reading public. Most of his novels have a specific social theme, e.g. the menace of the criminal underworld in Oliver Twist, and the barrenness of the utilitarian philosophy in Hard Times. The Dickens novels generally have in common four characteristics: sentimentality, melodrama, humor, and fast-moving, intricate plots. Since Dickens had to hold his readers' interest from one installment of the serial to the next, each chapter (installment) had to be entertaining in itself and lead on to the next stage; hence the tension, complexity, and often incredibility of the story line, as in Oliver Twist.

Dickens wrote some 20 novels in his comparatively short life, as well as numerous short stories, essays, and non-fiction articles. He was also an editor, of the London newspaper the Daily News--founded by him--for a few months in 1846, and between 1850 and his death of his own highly successful magazines, Household Words and its successor All the Year Round. Beginning in 1858 Dickens was noted for his public readings from his novels and stories. He worked so hard at perfecting these readings that the effort is said to have shortened his life.

b. The Book.

Oliver Twist was serialized in Bentley's Magazine in 20 installments in 1837-9. It was published as a book in 1838. Both the serial and the book were illustrated by the great satirical cartoonist, George Cruikshank. There have been innumerable editions of Oliver Twist in every major language and several films derived from the story, including the recent musical "Oliver."

The novel is realistic in the sense that it was grounded on genuine conditions with which Dickens was familiar from his background as a police reporter. Many of the characters, e.g. Fagin, Sikes, and Nancy, were patterned after real people Dickens knew or had heard about. The story is topical, containing many references to contemporary public issues such as capital punishment, prostitution, the Poor Law, and the treatment of orphans.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The setting of the story is London and its neighboring counties in the 1830s. The plot is melodramatic and so dependent upon coincidence that the reader cannot take it seriously. Another obstacle for the modern reader is the cloying sentimentality with which Dickens, like other early Victorian writers, drenched his prose. (In fairness, we have to concede that they were genuinely sentimental. The Victorians were both more emotional and more moralistic than we are today.) If Tom Brown's School Days can be called "preachy," Oliver Twist must be called "mushy."

Oliver Twist is an orphan pauper born in a parish workhouse, one of the grim institutions of Victorian England, feared and detested by the poor. He is badly treated by the workhouse staff, especially the overseer or beadle, Mr. Bumble. (Note Dickens's use of humorous names suggestive of the character's appearance and personality.) After an unhappy apprenticeship to an undertaker, Oliver flees to London, where he falls into the clutches of Fagin, a "fence" for stolen goods who has his own gang of juvenile pickpockets. Oliver's initiation as a pickpocket is briefly interrupted by a short stay with a prosperous old gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, but the Fagin gang kidnaps him and sends him on a burgling expedition with the villainous "cracksman" Bill Sikes. The robbery fails and Oliver is abandoned at the scene by Sikes and his accomplice Crackit.

Another period of sweetness and light follows, as Oliver is taken in and educated by Mrs. Maylie, the kindly old lady whose house Sikes had tried to burgle. In the meantime a sinister character, Monks, who turns out later to be Oliver's half-brother, has hired Fagin to pervert the boy. Monks also tries to bribe Bumble to destroy evidence of Oliver's parentage. Nancy, a kind-hearted prostitute, warns Oliver's "straight" friends of the scheme against him, only to be brutally murdered by Sikes. The law now enters the action, Sikes and Fagin are hunted down and dealt with, the gang is dispersed, and Monks is exposed. At the end of the novel we learn that Oliver is actually a middle class child whose unmarried mother had taken refuge in Bumble's workhouse. Under Mr. Brownlow's guardianship, he rejoins the class to which he belongs.

The characterization of Oliver is weak and sentimental, the prostitute Nancy is too generous and courageous to be believable, and the blackhearted Monks is incredible; but the two criminal villains, Fagin and Sikes, are strikingly and convincingly depicted. There are many memorable minor characters, e.g. Bumble, his grasping wife, the "flash" burglar Toby Crackit, and the "Artful Dodger," a sharp young pickpocket. The slum, or "rookery," inhabited by Fagin's gang is vividly described, and the thieves' jargon--cleaned up, of course--gives flavor to the story.

d. Principal Characters.

Oliver Twist, the hero, a workhouse orphan.

Mr. Bumble, parish beadle and workhouse overseer.

Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker, briefly Oliver's employer.

Noah Claypool, a rascally apprentice.

Jack Dawkins, the "Artful Dodger," a young pickpocket.

Charley Bates, the Dodger's sidekick.

Fagin, a receiver of stolen goods and criminal mastermind.

Mr. Brownlow, a prosperous old gentleman.

Mr. Grimwig, a grouchy friend of Mr. Brownlow.

Bill Sikes, a villainous burglar.

Nancy, a prostitute.

Toby Crackit, an accomplice of Sikes.

Mrs. Corney (later Mrs. Bumble), matron of the workhouse.

Mrs. Maylie, a rich gentlewoman.

Rose, Mrs. Maylie's adopted daughter.

Monks, a vicious scoundrel.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

Kellow Chesney, The Victorian Underworld (New York, 1970).

Peter Collins, Dickens and Crime (London, 1962).

Humphry House, The Dickens World (Oxford, 1941).

J. Hillis Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels (Cambridge, Mass., 1958).

J.J. Tobias, Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1967).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) It is said by some critics that Dickens, for all his humanitarianism, was a class-conscious bourgeois. Is there much evidence for this charge in Oliver Twist?

(2) Other students of Dickens see in Oliver Twist (as well as other Dickens novels) a sympathetic leaning toward social outcasts such as thieves, prostitutes, circus performers, and actors. From your reading of this novel do you agree or disagree?

(3) If you were rewriting Oliver Twist for modern readers, or writing your own novel about the same subject, what would you (a) take out and (b) put in?

(4) What roles do genetic inheritance and environmental conditioning seem to play in Dickens's social theory?

(5) Many Jews object to the character of Fagin on the grounds of anti-Semitism. Do they have a case?

3. Mary Barton.

a. The Author.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-1865) was the daughter and the wife of Unitarian ministers. Her father was also an amateur journalist, under whose direction Mrs. Gaskell studied literature and learned to write competently. Her husband's chapel was in Manchester, which was to be her home from 1832 onward. After her marriage, in addition to raising seven children, Mrs. Gaskell was active in charitable and welfare work, especially during the severe industrial depression of 1839-42. It was her experiences and observations during the depression that formed the background of Mary Barton. Mrs.

had a good ear for working class speech, which she picked up at the night school classes she taught for working girls. In addition to Mary Barton--her most successful novel--Mrs. Gaskell wrote Cranford (1851), a semi-autobiographical novel of village life; Ruth (1853), the story of a "fallen woman"; and North and South (1855), another "industrial novel." She contributed to various periodicals, including Charles Dickens's Household Words. Dickens admired her writing.

b. The Book.

Mary Barton was first published in 1848 in two volumes. Publication at this time was opportune, as the second wave of Chartism was reaching its peak (the first, depicted in the novel, was in 1839), and political revolution, to which social unrest had contributed, was sweeping Europe.

The novel oscillates from a careful documentary--dispassionately recording dialect, food costs, clothing styles, living conditions, and working class politics--to the tearful sentiment characteristic of the early Victorian novel. (This is the last of our novels in which we find much of this bathos.) Despite the tear-jerking, the depiction of personality is realistic. None of the characters in Mary Barton is either implausible or caricatured, as many of Dickens's are. From Carson the industrialist and his philandering son, to the working class Bartons and Wilsons, Mrs. Gaskell portrays individuals who had their real-life counterparts in the Manchester of the Hungry Forties.

Mary Barton was both praised for its realism and objectivity, and condemned for not sugar-coating the class conflict. Friedrich Engels, the associate of Karl Marx, who in 1845 had published a sociological study of Manchester factory workers, thought well of the novel; but a reviewer in the Edinburgh Review denounced Mrs. Gaskell for not representing the employer class more favorably. Mrs. Gaskell was also criticized for allowing one of the central characters, whom she admired, to commit a murder and escape legal punishment. Modern critics have attacked the murder incident as being unrepresentative of the "non-violent" British working class. However, there actually was such a murder in Manchester in 1831; and when relatives of the real murdered man accused Mrs. Gaskell of capitalizing on their tragedy, she pointed to several other assassinations of employers by workingmen in England and Scotland during the 1830s.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The time and place of the novel are Manchester in the late 1830s and early 1840s, a period of depression, industrial strife, and bitter class conflict. It was the beginning of a decade dominated by the Chartist movement, a political crusade in which working class trade unionists cooperated with middle class reformers and radicals.

John Barton, a hard-working weaver active in his trade union, is embittered by the death of his wife in childbirth, and by the shutting down of his factory by the owners, Mr. Carson and his son, following a fire. Barton blames the Carsons for collecting their insurance and riding out the hard times while their workers literally starve. The Chartist movement briefly gives Barton hope, but he is completely disillusioned by a visit to London to present a petition to Parliament. In the meantime his young daughter, Mary, becomes the family breadwinner as a dressmaker's assistant, while her father sits at home nursing his hatred of the employer class.

Mary--who is being courted by Jem Wilson, a young mechanic whose family have been friends of the Bartons for years--falls in love with Harry Carson, the factory owner's disreputable son. She hopes to become a "lady" by marrying young Carson, but his only intent is a quick seduction. Esther, sister of the dead Mrs. Carson and a prostitute, fears that her niece Mary will follow the same primrose path she has taken, and warns Jem that he must act to save her. Jem threatens Harry Carson with a beating if he does not leave Mary alone, but is told to keep the peace by a policeman who happens along.

A strike closes all the Manchester cotton works, and Barton is selected to serve on the trade union committee negotiating with the employers. In the course of the negotiations Harry Carson infuriates the union men. Barton is chosen by lot to kill him as an example to his fellow employers. Barton, who knows nothing of young Carson's scheme to seduce his daughter, borrows a pistol from Jem without telling the latter he plans to commit murder. Dropping the gun near the scene of the crime, Barton departs for Glasgow to whip up support for the Manchester strikers.

Jem of course is accused of the murder of his rival. Mary Barton, with the help of Esther, discovers that her father is the real killer. Desperately she tries to save the life of the young mechanic she now realizes she loves. Assisted by Job Legh, a wise, self-educated old workingman, and his blind granddaughter Margaret, Mary succeeds in establishing an alibi for Jem, whose innocence is proved in a dramatic courtroom scene.

John Barton returns home to find that Jem has been tried, and exonerated, in his absence. But Jem is still shunned as an accused killer, so Barton, ill and guilt-burdened, determines to admit the crime. On his deathbed, Barton confesses to Carson, the murdered man's father, and is absolved. Old Carson is softened by the experience and becomes more generous to his employees. The novel ends with Jem and Mary emigrating to Canada, to better their lot and escape the class struggle.

d. Principal Characters.

The Bartons:

John Barton, a weaver, trade unionist, and Chartist.

Mrs. Barton, John's wife.

Mary, their daughter.

Esther, Mrs. Barton's sister, a prostitute.

The Wilsons:

George Wilson, a weaver.

Jane, his sickly, short-tempered wife

Jem, their son, a successful mechanic.

Alice, George's older sister, a washer-woman and nurse.

Will, a sailor, Alice's foster son.

The Leghs:

Job Legh, a retired weaver and self-taught naturalist.

Margaret, his blind granddaughter, a folk singer.

The Carsons:

John Carson, an industrialist.

Harry, his son, a philandering dandy.

Sally Leadbitter, a malicious acquaintance of Mary Barton.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, The British Common People 1746-1946 (London, 1961), section V.

John W. Dodd, The Age of Paradox: A Biography of England 1841-1851 (New York, 1952), especially the illustrations.

Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (new edition, New York, 1958).

John L. and Barbara Hammond, The Age of the Chartists, 1832-1854 (London, 1930).

A.B. Hopkins, Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work (London, 1952).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) Compare and contrast the social values of the employer and working classes as depicted by Mrs. Gaskell in Mary Barton.

(2) Describe the different types of female characters found in Mary Barton. Do they appear as caricatures or real people?

(3) How does Mrs. Gaskell feel about collective action by working people to improve wages and working conditions? How else does she think they might satisfy their legitimate needs?

(4) To what does Mrs. Gaskell attribute the wide gap between rich and poor in the Great Britain of the 1840s?

(5) Compare and contrast the treatment of the issue of trade unionism and working class organization in Mary Barton and Hard Times.

(6) Point out some of the similarities and differences in the depiction of (a) workingmen and (b) employers in Mary Barton and Hard Times.

(7) What do we learn about the Chartist movement from reading Mary Barton?

(8) How do the two social classes in Mary Barton regard prostitution? Why do "fallen women" have a greater stigma among their own class than in the eyes of the other?

(9) The role of emigration in working class life is implied in the last part of Mary Barton. What was it?

(10) Does Mrs. Gaskell view the fate of working people fatalistically? What are some of the alternatives that she believes are open to them?

4. Hard Times.

a. The Author.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870). For biographical details, see the "Briefing on Oliver Twist."

b. The Book.

Hard Times was published in book form in 1854, while being serialized in Dickens's magazine Household Words. It has been republished many times.

Dickens, who took great interest in the conflict between capital and labor, had closely followed in the press the reporting of the engineers' (factory mechanics') strike of 1852. He knew that there was deep public concern and believed the time was ripe for a satirical novel attacking the economic philosophy and mental attitude of the employer class. To obtain first-hand knowledge, in January 1854 he traveled to the industrial town of Preston, northeast of Liverpool, where a bitter strike was in progress. His observations were incorporated into the description of the locale and mood of "Coketown," the imaginary factory town in Hard Times.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The period of the novel is the early 1850s. The setting is "Coketown," a factory town in the industrial northwest of England. The plotting is tight and brisk, and the length of the novel, for a Dickens serial, is quite short. The characters are intended to be caricatures rather than real people. It would be no exaggeration to say that Hard Times is a prose comic strip. The characteristic Dickens sentimentality is not completely absent, but we are spared the torrents of tears that make some of his books, e.g. Oliver Twist, embarrassing to twentieth century readers.

The main plot line is the disillusionment of Thomas Gradgrind, a dedicated, humorless Utilitarian, as he witnesses the destruction of his philosophy, exemplified in the ruin of his two older children trained in its principles. Gradgrind's harsh, unfeeling worship of practicality is contrasted with the sentimental, easy-going, unconventional life-style of the performers of a small circus, one of whom, Sissy Jupe, becomes a maidservant in Gradgrind's home.

Gradgrind, a retired hardware merchant, devotes his late middle age to two concerns: sponsoring a model school in which Utilitarianism and "Manchester economics" are drilled into the pupils, and preaching Utilitarianism in the House of Commons, to which he is elected to represent Coketown. He has already experimented with his educational philosophy on his children Louisa and Tom, upon whom it has had disastrous effect--though Gradgrind does not realize this for many years. Louisa, a cold, cynical young woman, is married--with complete indifference--to Josiah Bounderby, a bumptious, middle-aged cotton manufacturer. Tom, whose reaction to his authoritarian father is hatred of society and a determination to "rip it off," is given a responsible job in a bank owned by Bounderby, his brother-in-law.

Some years after her unhappy marriage to Bounderby, Louisa meets and is sexually attracted to James Harthouse, an unprincipled young aristocrat who wants to get into the House of Commons with Gradgrind's help. Harthouse also becomes friendly with Tom Gradgrind, who is envious of the man about town and tries to emulate him, going deeply into debt. To pay off his creditors, Tom robs Bounderby's bank and throws the blame on an unemployed laborer whom Bounderby has just discharged from his factory.

The major subplot is a trade union strike against Bounderby's cotton factory. An innocent victim of the strike is Stephen Blackpool, a weaver in the factory who refuses to join the strike because he disagrees with the principle of industrial strikes and doubts the motives of the union organizers. Blackpool is ostracized by his fellow workers, and then sacked by his obtuse boss, Bounderby, as a troublemaker. Blackpool is next set up by Tom Gradgrind for the bank robbery and becomes a fugitive. Only his devoted friend, Rachel, and Louisa Bounderby, who suspects her brother, believe in his innocence.

The plots are resolved, and Gradgrind's life work comes tumbling down, when Louisa is thrown out of Bounderby's house for flirting with Harthouse, and Tom's responsibility for the robbery is uncovered by a fellow employee. Ironically, the amateur detective, Bitzer, had been a star pupil in Gradgrind's Utilitarian school! Only the intervention of Louisa's maidservant, Sissy, enables Tom to escape justice with the aid of her friends, the circus troop. Sissy, it need hardly be said, had failed badly in her brief exposure to the Gradgrind school's curriculum.

A minor subplot, which Dickens only hits at but clearly intends to be read between the lines by his more perceptive readers, is the chancyness of the Victorian marriage lottery. Louisa Bounderby, Stephen Blackpool, and even Gradgrind himself are mismatched with their spouses, and their lives are warped and diminished by these unhappy, unbreakable marriages. The complete inability of a poor man like Blackpool to pay the legal costs of divorce proceedings is spelled out.

d. Principal Characters.

Thomas Gradgrind, M.P., retired businessman, Utilitarian philosopher, and educational philanthropist.

Sissy Jupe, daughter of a circus performer, who becomes a servant in Gradgrind's home.

Bitzer, model pupil at Gradgrind's model school, later a bank clerk.

McChoakumchild, teacher in Gradgrind's school.

Mr. Sleary, proprietor of the circus.

Louisa Gradgrind Bounderby, Gradgrind's daughter, later wife of

Josiah Bounderby, a blustering, hypocritical industrialist.

Tom Gradgrind, Jr., Gradgrind's son, a rebel without a cause.

Mrs. Sparsit, a gentlewoman fallen on hard times, who has become Bounderby's housekeeper.

Mrs. Gradgrind, Gradgrind's whining, weak-minded, helpless wife.

Stephen Blackpool, a weaver in Bounderby's factory.

Rachel, a working class woman, Stephen's friend.

Mrs. Blackpool, Stephen's drunken, dissipated wife.

Mrs. Pegler, a mysterious old country-woman, who turns out to be the "orphan" Bounderby's mother.

James Harthouse, an opportunistic, philandering dandy.

Slackbridge, a demagogic trade union organizer.

e. Recommended Background Reading. *

Ernest Albee, *A History of English Utilitarianism* (2nd edition, London, 1957).

Peter Collins, *Dickens and Education* (London, 1963).

J.F.C. Harrison, "The Victorian Gospel of Success," *Victorian Studies* I (December 1957), 155-64.

Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (3rd edition, Harmondsworth, England, 1976), chs. 3, 4.

Mary Sturt, *The Education of the People: A History of Primary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1967).

* Also recommended: Granada (British) Television's four-part dramatization of *Hard Times*, presented in the United States by the Public Broadcasting Service.

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) What general impression of Victorian Britain do we derive from *Hard Times*?

(2) What do we learn from this novel about the class structure in Great Britain in the 1850s, and Dickens's views about it?

(3) How does Dickens think the plight of the working class should be relieved?

(4) Was Gradgrind's educational system useful to the students? How did it compare with Dr. Arnold's? Were the objectives of the two systems similar? Is "Gradgrindism" dead in education today?

(5) If you read *Oliver Twist*, compare and contrast Dickens's appeal to the reader in the two novels. How have his methods changed, and why?

(6) There is an underworld in both Dickens novels we are reading for this course. Compare and contrast them. How does Dickens depict them? Is he sympathetic or unsympathetic?

(7) What does *Hard Times* tell us about the Victorian marriage code and Dickens's opinion of it?

(8) Pick one of the characters in *Hard Times* and show how Dickens uses this character to caricature a social theme.

5. The Way of All Flesh.

a. The Author.

Samuel Butler (1835-1902) was the son of an Anglican clergyman and the grandson of a bishop. After family troubles much like those of his hero in The Way of All Flesh, Butler was sent to New Zealand as a "remittance man." Contrary to expectation he prospered as a sheep farmer and returned to England in 1863 with a small fortune. Thereafter Butler did pretty much as he pleased, dabbling in art, music, and literature, revealing a modest talent in each field. He became well known as a controversialist, attacking the conventional opinions of his day in the press and in a number of self-published books. One of the latter, Erewhon (1872), a utopian novel, sold well, the only one of his many books to do so. The Way of All Flesh was found among Butler's papers after his death and was published posthumously.

b. The Book.

The Way of All Flesh was begun by Butler in 1872 and finished in 1884. The author decided against publication during his lifetime as he did not want to offend the living relatives he had portrayed so acidly in the novel. Following Butler's death his literary executor decided to bring out the book at once (1903). Although there was little reader interest at first, the novel influenced several Edwardian writers (including George Bernard Shaw) and was widely appreciated in the 1920s when debunking the Victorians became a national fad. Since then the book has become a classic, reprinted in numerous inexpensive editions in English and other languages.

The Way of All Flesh may be described as an autobiographical satire, in which Samuel Butler, taking advantage of the bitter animosity he felt for his own relatives, fired explosive shots at the Victorian family and other Victorian institutions, few of which missed the target.

Although the middle class family was Butler's principal victim, he also aimed lethal missiles at organized religion, the "public" school, and the institution of marriage. In Butler's novel we are given a much less attractive picture of a major public school than we got in Tom Brown's School Days. ("Roughborough" is partly modeled after Rugby, and "Dr. Skinner" after Thomas Arnold.)

Butler's impression of nineteenth century Anglicanism as canting hypocrisy is overdrawn, and must be balanced by more objective and favorable accounts. (See the sections on religion in Industrialisation and Culture and Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians.) The prudery and smugness of the Pontifex (Butler) parents, however, probably was not exaggerated very much. It was in laying bare the unconscious and well-meaning cruelty of Victorian--and many post-Victorian--parents that Butler made his greatest literary contribution.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The novel traces the history of five generations of the Pontifex family, from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth. The thirty years from about 1835 to 1865, in which Ernest Pontifex is growing up, are treated in the greatest detail. The plot unfolds in various places associated with the characters, principally the rural village of Battersby (Theobald Pontifex's parish), Roughborough Grammar School, Cambridge University, and London. The story is narrated by Edward Overton, a friend of the Pontifex family, actually Samuel Butler looking back at his boyhood and youth as characterized by Ernest Pontifex.

After being introduced by the narrator to the modest and respected founder of the family, a village carpenter, we are given full-length, and unpleasant, portraits of his son George, an overbearing publisher (who compares with Dickens's Bounderby in many ways), and grandson Theobald, a cowardly but bullying clergyman. Overton humorously details the maneuvers by which Theobald is tricked into marrying smug, shallow Christina Allaby, and then passes on to a long account of the pathetic childhood of Ernest, son of Theobald and Christina. Ernest, and his brother and sister, are raised according to what his parents, and indeed most middle class Victorian parents, consider to be the finest religious principles.

Life is no more pleasant for Ernest Pontifex when he exchanges his father's repressive parsonage for the petty sadism inflicted by the masters and students at Roughborough School. However his Aunt Alethea (modeled upon a real-life friend of Samuel Butler), his only kindly and humane relative, takes pity on Ernest and encourages him to develop his own personality and interests. Unfortunately Alethea soon dies, but she leaves Ernest a vast estate, to be administered by Mr. Overton until the boy is of age. Ernest is not told of his good fortune.

Cambridge University provides Ernest with greater freedom to be himself, but he has not yet thrown off the inferiority complex implanted by his home and school experiences. Still very impressionable and immature, he falls under the influence of an evangelistic sect. The young man yields to his father's demand that he enter the clergy, is ordained, and becomes a curate, or assistant minister, in a London parish. Here he takes up a new fad, ritualism, and is taken in by a rascally fellow curate who cheats him out of a legacy from his grandfather. Sexual problems also bedevil the inexperienced young man: he propositions a girl he mistakes for a prostitute and is sentenced to six months' hard labor.

Emerging from prison chastened and disillusioned, Ernest decides to give up his inherited place in the middle class and to become a tradesman. He prospers in a small way but, again the victim of his own unworldliness, marries an alcoholic who soon drags him down. At this critical point Mr. Overton decides to rescue Ernest from himself. It is found that Ernest's wife is a bigamist and arranged that she will go to America, leaving their two children to be raised in a working class family. Ernest is given nominal employment by Overton until his inheritance can be safely turned over to him.

Under Overton's kindly and somewhat cynical guidance, Ernest at last finds his proper level as a gentleman writer. With his life cushioned by his wealth, which enables him to travel and live in luxury, Ernest settles down and lives happily ever after.

The plot of The Way of All Flesh cannot be considered unrealistic, as the author's own life unfolded in very much the same way. Nevertheless, the happy ending seems rather false and contrived. What would have happened to Ernest if Overton, and Aunt Alethea's estate, had not been there to save him from his youthful mistakes? Not everyone was so fortunate, even in Victorian novels, as you will see when you read the sad story of poor but ambitious Jude the Obscure.

d. Principal Characters.

The Pontifex Family:

John, a versatile carpenter.

George, a pompous, domineering businessman.

Theobald, a self-righteous clergyman.

Christina, Theobald's complacent wife.

Ernest, Joey, and Charlotte, children of Theobald and Christina.

Alethea, Theobald's sister, a lady of means.

Others:

Edward Overton, the narrator, a comic playwright.

Dr. Skinner, a hypocritical headmaster.

Ellen, an alcoholic servant girl, later Ernest Pontifex's wife.

Pryer, a dishonest curate.

Mrs. Jupp, a bawdy but good-hearted landlady.

Towneley, a rich young gentleman and college friend of Ernest.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise (London, 1964), especially ch. 5.

Anthony O.J. Cockshut, Anglican Attitudes (London, 1959).

G.D.H. Cole, Samuel Butler and The Way of All Flesh (London, 1947).

Lee E. Holt, Samuel Butler (New York, 1964), especially ch. 8.

Marion Lochhead, Their First Ten Years: Victorian Childhood (London, 1956).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) After reading this novel, would you prefer to grow up in a middle class home during the 1850s or the 1970s? Elaborate.

(2) Are the characters Theobald and Christina strictly Victorian, or do we find parents like this today? What is dated and what is universal about these characters?

(3) One of the Victorian traits that Butler is criticizing is "respectability" (although he does not entirely condemn it). What was it? Is it still one of our values or has it gone out of fashion?

(4) Compare and contrast the treatments of "public" school life in this book and Hughes's Tom Brown's School Days. Where do you think the truth lies?

(5) How would you describe Mr. Overton's philosophy of life (the author's actually)? Do you agree with it.

(6) Why is the impression of Anglicanism given in this novel distorted and unfair to the church?

(7) How does prudery influence and damage the life of Ernest Pontifex? Would this be likely to happen today? Explain.

(8) Various Victorian novelists have treated poverty (or straitened circumstances) as both demeaning and ennobling. Where does Butler stand in this debate?

(9) Compare and contrast the ways in which the four generations of Pontifex parents treat their children.

(10) Raymond Chapman, a literary critic, writes that in this novel "there is destruction in plenty, but little attempt to rebuild. The rehabilitated Ernest Pontifex is a dull prig, cultivating his private garden and seeming untroubled by the continuance of things from which he had suffered. He has freedom from responsibility, but freedom for what?" Do you agree? Discuss.

Note: Course instructors may find helpful the article by Stephen Kern, "Explosive Intimacy: Psychodynamics of the Victorian Family," Journal of Psychohistory I (Winter 1974), 437-61. This article is based partly upon wide reading of nineteenth century fiction, British and continental.

6. Jude the Obscure.

a. The Author.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was the son of a building contractor and studied to be an ecclesiastical architect. Hardy's early career goals--like those of his character, Jude Fawley--were frustrated, but unlike Jude he found a vocation, literature, in which he could express himself. Hardy published his first piece of fiction, a short story, in 1865, and for over sixty years stories, novels, drama, and verse flowed from his pen, much of this of great or near-great distinction. Unlike some writers of quality, Hardy made money from his works, although his outspokenness won him many enemies and stirred up several literary furors.

Most of Hardy's fiction was inspired by the rural life of Dorset, Wiltshire, and Berkshire, where his yeoman family had lived for generations. (This region is due south of the White Horse Vale depicted in Tom Brown's School Days.) Hardy renamed this area "Wessex" after the Anglo-Saxon kingdom with this name situated here. Hardy's fiction is valuable to the historian and history teacher because it recaptures the oral traditions of the rural people of "Wessex" before the Industrial Revolution. His work tends to be pessimistic and ironical, with an underlying sense of bleak humor.

b. The Book.

Jude the Obscure was serialized in an American magazine in 1894 and published as a book in Great Britain the following year. The serial had been expurgated for "family readers." The book version, which we read in this course, offended many readers by its explicit and strongly stated views on sexuality and the Victorian marriage code. An Anglican bishop publicly burned the novel, and Hardy was castigated in the press by most reviewers. ("He really wanted to burn me!" was Hardy's reaction to the bishop.) The author was so angry at the public reaction to what he considered his best and most ambitious work that he never again wrote a novel. By the end of his long life Hardy saw his judgment vindicated as Jude became a world literary classic.

Hardy, who was in an embittered mood in the early 1890s because of family trouble, admitted that he wrote Jude to call attention to the hypocrisy of legal marriage and the viciousness of the English class system. Hardy despised the English university, which in one passage he identified with "centuries of gloom, bigotry and decay." One of his objects in Jude was to show how higher education closed its doors, and was completely indifferent, to highly intelligent and intellectually bent men and women of the lower social classes.

Hardy's other aim, perhaps more important to him as catharsis, was to censure the marriage code, which the author believed ruined the lives of countless men and women by punishing them for youthful sexual adventures, yet made life a hell for many of those who took the code seriously. Note the contrast between Hardy's condemnatory but deeply serious view of marriage, and the sardonic and satirical stance of Samuel Butler. Dickens's observations on marriage in Hard Times, scathing but less tragic than Hardy's, should also be recalled.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The time of the novel is the 1860s. The setting is "Wessex" in southern England, particularly "North Wessex" which is actually Berkshire. Among the semi-fictitious places that appear in the novel are the village of Marygreen and the larger towns of Alfredston, Christminster (actually Oxford), Melchester (actually Salisbury), Shaston (Shaftesbury), and Aldbrickham (Reading).

Jude Fawley, an orphan raised in the village of Marygreen by an old baker-woman, has ambitions of becoming a university graduate and an Anglican clergyman. He begins a disciplined course of self-education while supporting himself as a stonemason, work in which he shows skill and talent. Jude's plans are given a sharp setback by a brief and unhappy marriage, resulting entirely from sexual infatuation, to Arabella Donn, a barmaid. However Jude obtains partial freedom when Arabella, tired of him, emigrates to Australia with her parents. He moves to the university town of Christminster, where he obtains good-paying work as an ecclesiastical mason and resumes his self-teaching.

Soon after settling down in Christminster, Jude meets a cousin, Sue Bridehead, an emancipated young woman who is something of an intellectual and freethinker. Although there is an immediate meeting of minds between the two, they deny themselves a physical relationship because of Jude's legal marriage to the absent Arabella. Sue, who wants to become a teacher, is put in touch by Jude with Mr. Phillotson, a master-teacher who had once taught Jude at Marygreen. Sue, absent from Jude as a student teacher, develops a sense of obligation to the middle aged Phillotson, whom she does not love, and marries him.

The marriage between Sue and Phillotson soon deteriorates because of Sue's inability to respond to her husband sexually. The schoolmaster generously gives Sue her freedom and encourages her to live with Jude, whom he knows she loves. As a result of his liberality, too advanced for his time, Phillotson loses his excellent teaching post at Shaston and has to return to his old, low-paid job at Marygreen. In the meantime Arabella returns from Australia, determined to marry a well-to-do pub keeper whom she had met there. Jude's free-love cohabitation with Sue provides grounds for his divorce by Arabella and Sue's by Phillotson. Sexually inhibited, Sue has almost as much difficulty relating to Jude as she had to Phillotson.

Arabella brings back with her from Australia a young son born of her earlier intercourse with Jude. The boy, who is called Little Father Time because of his melancholy, prematurely aged appearance, is mentally disturbed but is taken in by Jude and Sue who in time have two children of their own. The family moves from place to place, dogged by bad luck and public disapproval of its unorthodox life style. There are, however, periods in which the parents are quite happy and fulfilled, although by now Jude has abandoned his hopes of intellectual attainment and social advancement. This bittersweet period ends when the unbalanced, miserable Father Time kills the two babies and hangs himself.

This terrible shock throws Sue into a deep mental depression from which she slowly emerges convinced that she is still married to Phillotson in the eyes of God and must return to him. This she does, remarries him, and becomes a bitter, morbid, conforming housewife--a state that Hardy implies is the natural outcome of marriage, inflicted by society upon most "normal" women. There is the further ironical suggestion that Phillotson is forgiven for his "sin" (liberality to Sue), is given back his good teaching position, and is even going to be rewarded with a school inspectorship!

Separated from his beloved Sue, Jude goes completely to pieces, declining progressively through alcoholism to tuberculosis. Arabella, down on her luck after the death of her second husband, tricks Jude into remarrying her; but the unlucky stonemason betrays her by becoming too sick to support her. Even before his death she is casting eyes, with a view to marriage, at a sinister quack doctor who has hovered in the wings of the plot from the start. Jude's death can be attributed to emotional self-destruction, the inevitable outcome of frustration and bad luck piled constantly higher.

Readers of Jude the Obscure will find the last part (Part Six) of the novel almost oppressively tragic, a departure from the hard, but not hopeless, realism of the earlier phases of the story. The two major characters who surmount the catastrophe are Phillotson, who surrenders to bullying convention against his better nature, and Arabella, an amoral and completely opportunistic person, determined to survive. The sensitive and incorruptible protagonists, Jude and Sue, are destroyed by fate, the one physically, the other spiritually. Hardy seems to share Samuel Butler's belief that those who bend do not break, but unlike Butler his sympathy is for the beautiful losers who fight bitter fate until the tragic and inevitable end.

d. Principal Characters.

Jude Fawley, an intellectually ambitious stonemason.

Drusilla Fawley, Jude's great-aunt, a baker-woman.

Richard Phillotson, a schoolmaster.

Arabella Donn, a barmaid who marries Jude.

Sue Bridehead, a charming but neurotic young woman.

Mrs. Edlin, a kindly widow.

Physician Vilbert, an itinerant quack doctor.

George Gillingham, a headmaster and friend of Phillotson.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

John Betjeman and David Vaisey, Victorian and Edwardian Oxford: From Old Photographs (London, 1971).

Henry J. Burgess, Enterprise in Education: The Story of the Work of the Established Church in the Education of the People Prior to 1870 (London, 1958).

Denys Kay-Robinson, Hardy's Wessex Reappraised (Newton Abbot, England, 1972).

William R. Ward, Victorian Oxford (London, 1965).

Merryn Williams, Thomas Hardy and Rural England (New York, 1972).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) The character of Sue Bridehead is sometimes seen as a precursor of the feminist movement. Do you agree? Why?

(2) How much of Jude Fawley's failure can be attributed to class barriers of the Victorian era rather than to timeless character defects?

(3) Compare and contrast the religious views of Jude and Sue when they first meet. What intellectual tendencies of the period does Sue represent?

(4) Jude Fawley and Ernest Pontifex (The Way of All Flesh) are involved in similar predicaments, are affected by them similarly, but emerge from them quite differently. Explain.

(5) Thomas Hardy seems to be attributing much of the trouble experienced by Jude and Sue to genetics, and the influence of genetics upon culture. Discuss.

(6) How does Hardy's impression of the traditional English universities compare with those of Thomas Hughes (Tom Brown's School Days) and Samuel Butler (The Way of All Flesh)?

(7) Compare and contrast the views of the Victorian marriage institution held by Hardy, Dickens (Hard Times), and Butler (The Way of All Flesh).

(8) The Victorian era is often represented as one of unusual dedication to the ideal of individual freedom. Does Jude the Obscure support this concept?

(9) Prostitutes and women of easy virtue figure in several of the novels we have been reading. What are some of the different and similar qualities characterized by Nancy (Oliver Twist), Esther (Mary Barton), Ellen (The Way of All Flesh), and Arabella (Jude the Obscure)?

(10) Describe the training of teachers for the Anglican Church's National Schools as revealed in Jude the Obscure. What traits do the authorities evidently want to inculcate in these Victorian student teachers? How does teacher training in our own day compare?

7. The Prime Minister.

a. The Author.

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was the son of an unsuccessful barrister. His mother, Frances Trollope, wrote potboiler novels and travel books to support her impoverished family. Trollope became a Post Office clerk at the age of 19, and worked his way up to middle-level officialdom, but his independence and brusque temper prevented him from rising any higher.

From his early thirties onward, Trollope devoted most of his spare time to writing books with the declared object of making money. Between 1847 and his death the author published over fifty novels, as well as several collections of short stories, biographies, accounts of his travels, and miscellaneous essays. This remarkable output, which earned Trollope the equivalent of nearly one million 1977 dollars, was made possible by the author's invariable habit of writing ten pages an hour for five or six hours every day.

Trollope's novels, which were mostly best sellers after he became known in the 1850s, are mainly tales of social and political life among the mid-Victorian gentry and nobility, marvelously evocative of the manners and life-style of these classes. Two series of six books each, the "Barsetshire" and the "Palliser" novels, are particularly distinguished.

b. The Book.

The Prime Minister was written by Trollope in 1874, serialized in 1875, and published in four volumes in 1876. It is the fifth of the "Palliser" series of novels, in which the characters of Plantagenet and Glencora Palliser, the Duke and Duchess of Omnium, connect six otherwise independent books. The series was televised by the BBC, and released over Canadian TV in 1975.

The Prime Minister was not well received by reviewers, and sold poorly compared to the other books in the sequence. Critics of the 1870s attacked the novel as unconvincing, monotonous, pessimistic, and in bad taste (chiefly because of the death scene of Ferdinand Lopez). In contrast, Robert Polhemus, a modern student of Trollope, describes The Prime Minister as "a magnificent book" which is the "finest expression of /Trollope's/ art." Whatever its literary merits, the novel is unsurpassed in disclosing the upper class world of the early 1870s.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The time of the story is about 1874, the setting London and "Barsetshire," a fictional county in the south of England sometimes identified with Hampshire (and therefore just to the east of Hardy's "Wessex").

There are two interlocking plots in The Prime Minister, one the chronicle of the Duke of Omnium's Coalition government, the other the story of the Wharton and Fletcher families and the Jewish adventurer, Ferdinand Lopez.

The Liberals, headed by Mr. Gresham (read Gladstone), have just lost an election, but the Conservatives, led by Mr. Daubeny (read Disraeli), do not have a clear majority. After a prolonged deadlock, the Duke of Omnium, a great Liberal peer, agrees to form a Coalition ministry representing the two major parties "so that the Queen may have a government." The Duke intends to hold office for a few months only, until the political scene clears. This does not satisfy the exuberant Duchess, who--after twenty years of stormy married life--hopes to make a great statesman of her shy and stodgy husband. She plans to do this by making their two country houses, Matching Manor and Gatherum Castle, the social and political centers of Great Britain.

In the meantime Emily Wharton, daughter of Abel Wharton, a rich barrister, falls in love with Ferdinand Lopez, a penniless but ambitious adventurer. The dark, handsome Lopez sweeps the beautiful Emily off her feet, despite the bitter opposition of her very conservative father. Lopez, a Portugese Jew, is not only not respectable but "un-English" in the eyes of old Mr. Wharton, his baronet cousin Sir Alured, and Arthur Fletcher, the young country gentleman the Whartons wanted Emily to marry. Emily's determination to wed Lopez forces her father to surrender, but he refuses to let the man have control of his daughter's inheritance. The other Whartons and the Fletchers cut the newlyweds socially, as do most of Emily's other friends.

Lopez forms an alliance with Sexty Parker, a stockbroker, to corner the market in Peruvian guano fertilizer. To do so, he must get his hands on Emily's money, still managed by her father. Emily's infatuation with Lopez begins to weaken as, gradually, it becomes clear that he loves her less for herself than for her property and social position.

Lopez also has political ambitions, and uses his connection with Emily's brother Everett, a softheaded young Radical, to get an invitation to a garden party at Gatherum Castle. Lopez charms the Duchess of Omnium, who is anxious to put life into her husband's Coalition by encouraging "interesting" young men to seek Parliamentary seats. Without the Duke's knowledge, the Duchess arranges for Lopez to contest the Palliser family's pocket borough of Silverbridge, which has just fallen vacant. The Conservatives put up Arthur Fletcher, the man Emily had jilted for Lopez.

After further complications, the dovetailing plots climax in the Silverbridge election. Lopez, defeated by Fletcher, has spent more in the campaign than he can afford. He is in jeopardy because he and Parker have an option on a huge guano shipment and they can't pay for it. Faced with ruin, Lopez approaches both his father-in-law and the Duke of Omnium with demands for money. In a blackmailing letter to the Duke he threatens to reveal the Duchess's intrigues with the Silverbridge Liberals to The People's Banner, a muckraking Radical paper. The Duke, furious with his wife, agrees to pay Lopez to protect her name. But the paper gets the story anyway and it precipitates a political scandal. The Omnium government, which is already shaky, collapses ignominiously.

The scandal also discredits Lopez. When the guano deal falls through, he offers Abel Wharton to take a job as a business agent in Central America, leaving Emily behind, if Wharton will finance him. But Lopez's exposure as a blackmailer destroys this last hope of escaping personal ruin. In a dramatic scene, the failed adventurer throws himself in front of a fast express train.

In the last chapters of the novel, the widowed Emily, after a decent interval, marries faithful Arthur Fletcher, whose sterling qualities she appreciates at last. The Duke forgives his wife her peccadillo, and is himself assured by his fellow Liberals that his honor is clear. The implication is that he will soon join the new Liberal-Radical ministry to promote his lifelong goal of converting Britain to the metric system and decimal currency! Both the Duke and the Duchess regret the passing of the ill-fated Coalition, but "it is done and gone, and can never come back again."

The political plot of The Prime Minister is not keyed to real events and, except for Gresham and Daubeny, none of the fictional politicians can be identified with real persons. The issues of the times--trouble in Ireland. the rising cost of armaments, the growing power of the "penny press" and of finance capitalism--are kept in the background. Nevertheless the political scene as interpreted by Trollope is completely authentic. The unique character of this era, when politics was still the plaything of great noblemen, and crafty whips and conniving wire-pullers wheeled and dealed in private clubs and country houses, is brilliantly captured.

d. Principal Characters.

Ferdinand Lopez, a speculating financier of dubious origins.

Sexty Parker, a shady stockbroker.

Everett Wharton, a young clubman with Radical ideas, son of

Abel Wharton, Q.C., a rich old barrister.

Emily Wharton, daughter of Abel and sister of Everett, later Lopez's wife.

Harriet Roby, Emily's aunt, a social climber.

Plantagenet Palliser, Duke of Omnium, Prime Minister of a Coalition government, husband of

Glencora Palliser, Duchess of Omnium, who has great ambitions for her husband.

Phineas Finn, an Irish M.P., minister in the Omnium Cabinet, husband of

Marie Finn, the Duchess's closest friend.

Duke of St. Bungay, a venerable politician, mentor to his "young friend" the Duke of Omnium.

Mr. Rattler and Mr. Roby, Parliamentary whips for the Coalition government. (Do not confuse Thomas Roby, the whip, with Richard Roby, husband of Harriet.)

Sir Orlando Drought, a discontented and unreliable Conservative minister in the Duke's Cabinet.

Sir Alured Wharton, Bart., a country squire, cousin of Abel Wharton.

Arthur Fletcher, a young country gentleman, later an M.P. and Emily Wharton's second husband.

Lady Rosina De Courcy, an impecunious gentlewoman "provided for" by her friend the Duke of Omnium.

Barrington Erle, a veteran politician with a post in the Coalition Cabinet.

Joshua Monk, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Duke's Cabinet.

Quintus Slide, a muckraking newspaper editor.

e. Recommended Background Reading. *

John Halperin, Trollope and Politics: A Study of the Pallisers and Others (London, 1977).

Harold J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone (London, 1959).

Michael Sadleir, Trollope: A Commentary (revised edition, London, 1945).

Francis M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1963).

Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, The Squire and His Relations (London, 1956).

* Also recommended: BBC-TV's 22-part dramatization of the Palliser series of novels.

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) What social tendencies in mid-Victorian Britain is the character of Ferdinand Lopez meant to illustrate? Does Trollope seem to approve of these trends? How do we know?

(2) Briefly describe the British political system of the 1870s that is revealed in The Prime Minister. What are some of the contrasts with twentieth century politics?

(3) What is the Duke of Omnium's political philosophy? Does it seem to be appropriate for one in his social station?

(4) Compare and contrast the characters of the two Dukes, Omnium and St. Bungay. What differing political attitudes of the period are they intended to represent?

(5) Which of the characters in The Prime Minister would be (a) most comfortable and (b) least comfortable living in the twentieth century?

(6) What is the status and role of upper middle class women as seen in this novel? How does it contrast with that of working class women as depicted in such novels as Hard Times, Mary Barton, and Jude the Obscure?

(7) How does Trollope look upon the inexpensive newspaper of his day, intended for the mass reading public, and its growing power over political life?

(8) What were some of the disadvantages of being both titled and rich in Victorian Britain?

(9) What was the function of the gentleman's club in the life of the upper middle class males of Trollope's day? Why was it so important an institution?

(10) "The Victorian aristocracy was a class under siege, its power and life style threatened by barbarian invaders. Yet it managed to hold the fort while surrendering some undefensible outposts." What is meant by this statement? Illustrate with examples from The Prime Minister.

8. The Secret Agent.

a. The Author.

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) was originally named Teodor Korzeniowski. His Polish parents--Poland was then part of the Russian Empire--were exiled to Siberia for anti-government activities and he accompanied them. After going to school in Poland and Russia, Conrad (to use his subsequent pen name) escaped to the West and worked as a seaman on French and British vessels. By 1884 he had obtained a master's license, become a ship's captain, and been naturalized as a British subject. While still at sea Conrad began writing short stories, and in 1894 he retired from seafaring to become a professional writer.

Conrad's early stories and novels were about life at sea or had a seafaring background. Beginning with the novel Lord Jim, published in 1900, Conrad turned to psychological and political themes. His finest works include Heart of Darkness (1902), Nostromo (1904), and The Rescue (1920), novels about imperialism and revolution in the non-European world; The Secret Agent (1907) and Under Western Eyes (1911), in which the theme is anarchism and the revolt against established authority; and Victory (1915), a study of moral responsibility in the face of evil.

Conrad was fluent in Polish, Russian, French, and English. All of his published writings were done in English, the final language he mastered.

b. The Book.

The Secret Agent was first published in 1907 and has gone through many editions. It was filmed as a suspense thriller by Alfred Hitchcock in 1937, under the title "The Woman Alone."

The book was carefully researched by Conrad, who spent many hours in the British Museum Newspaper Library pouring over press accounts of anarchist activities, particularly an actual abortive attempt in 1894 to blow up the Greenwich Observatory. However, much of the mood and spirit of the novel came from conversations with anarchists and people who knew about anarchism, including "bohemian" writers, journalists, and police officials.

The anarchists who are characters in The Secret Agent are drawn from living people, either anarchists or adherents of other revolutionary movements such as Irish nationalism. For example, "The Professor," a living bomb who walks the streets of London with his finger on a detonator, had a prototype in Luke "Dynamite" Dillon, a figure in the Irish Republican Brotherhood. The representatives of law and order--"Sir Ethelred," the Home Secretary; the Assistant Commissioner of Scotland Yard; and Chief Inspector Heat--can also be keyed with real persons.

This novel can be read on several levels: as a detective story, as a psychological novel, or as a re-creation of a slice of London life in the late nineteenth century. Of particular interest in this course is its focus upon the anarchist subculture, the reaction to anarchism of the British Establishment, and the attempts--which were in fact made--by foreign powers to exploit the revolutionary movement in their own interests.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The time of the novel is 1886. The setting is London, particularly the working class Soho district in which Mr. Verloc has his shop, and Whitehall, the center of government, where the Metropolitan Police Headquarters ("Scotland Yard") and the Home Office are located.

Adolf Verloc pretends to be an anarchist and maintains a small, dingy shop in which leftist newspapers, "dirty books," and pornographic pictures are for sale. His wife, Winnie; her mother, the widow of a pub keeper; and Winnie's feebleminded brother Stevie live with him in comfortable quarters behind the shop. Verloc is quite well off, but his income is derived not from his sleazy shop but from the secret service fund of the Russian Embassy. Verloc is in fact a secret agent, reporting to the Russians on the doings of the foreign anarchists living in exile in London, who believe that the shopkeeper is one of them.

As the novel opens a crisis has arisen because Verloc's "control," Mr. Vladimir, a Russian diplomat, is dissatisfied with his work. Vladimir wants Verloc to transform himself into what the secret service today would call a "dirty trickster." In order to force the British government to take repressive action against the anarchists, Verloc is to fabricate a bomb outrage at the Greenwich Observatory. The anarchists will be blamed for the explosion and will be rounded up by the police and deported. Verloc, a lazy, cowardly, peaceful man, is horrified by this assignment and has no idea how to go about it.

We soon learn that a bomb has exploded at Greenwich which, although it has not damaged the Observatory, has blown to bits the man who was carrying it. The police, upon investigating, are told that two men were observed at the scene of the explosion shortly before it occurred. Little remains of the unfortunate bomb carrier, but there is one piece of evidence, a charred coat collar, with an address written upon it. Chief Inspector Heat, the Special Branch detective in charge of anarchist affairs, recognizes the address as that of Verloc's shop. Verloc, it seems, has acted as a police spy as well as a secret agent of the Russians.

Heat's superior, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, is worried that the crime will be pinned on Michaelis, a harmless philosophical anarchist and protegé of an elderly noblewoman who is a friend of the Assistant Commissioner's wife. Unlike the efficient but unimaginative detective, Heat, the Assistant Commissioner thinks he sees the fine hand of the Russian Embassy behind the outrage. He takes his suspicions to the Home Secretary, Sir Ethelred, who authorizes him to proceed with his own investigation.

In the meantime Winnie Verloc finds her husband behaving strangely. She is living alone with him now, as her mother has retired to an old-age home and Stevie, she thinks, is vacationing with the anarchist Michaelis in the country. Her world suddenly disintegrates when Inspector Heat appears at the shop and she overhears him talking to Verloc about the Greenwich explosion. Piecing together what she hears them whispering and what she has read in the newspaper, Winnie realizes that Stevie was the bomb carrier who was blown to bits!

The Assistant Commissioner, who had called at Verloc's shop incognito and spoken with the secret agent shortly before Heat arrived, reports to Sir Ethelred that his suspicions about the Russians have been confirmed by Verloc. Soon afterward the Assistant Commissioner encounters Mr. Vladimir and conveys to the Russian that agents provocateurs employed by foreign embassies will not be tolerated by the British government.

Verloc knows that, because of the Greenwich fiasco, he is out of a job and in danger of being murdered by the anarchists he has deceived and betrayed. Although the police are willing to let him disappear, he thinks it will be safer to go to jail. He withdraws all his funds from the bank to support his wife during his confinement. Verloc cannot appreciate why Winnie is utterly grief stricken over the accidental death of her feebleminded brother. He does not understand that caring for Stevie was the foundation of Winnie's life and, indeed, the only reason she had married Verloc. Tired and confused, Verloc is totally unprepared when Winnie, maddened by grief, stabs him to death with a carving knife.

Attempting to flee to France, Winnie is aided by one of the anarchists, Ossipon, who pretends that he is in love with her. His real motive is to get his hands on Verloc's money, which he does. Deserted by Ossipon, the unlucky woman drowns herself.

d. Principal Characters.

Adolf Verloc, shopkeeper, pretended anarchist, secret agent.

Winnie Verloc, his Cockney wife.

Stevie, Winnie's half-witted brother.

Mr. Vladimir, Russian diplomat, Verloc's "control."

Karl Yundt, a retired terrorist.

Michaelis, a philosophical anarchist.

Comrade Ossipon, a pseudo-anarchist and petty confidence man.

"The Professor," a nihilistic scientist.

Chief Inspector Heat, the Special Branch's expert on anarchism.

The Assistant Commissioner, head of Scotland Yard's Special Branch.

Sir Ethelred, the Home Secretary.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

Richard Deacon, A History of the British Secret Service (London, 1969), especially ch. 12.

Avrom Fleishman, Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad (Baltimore, 1967), especially ch. 7.

Eloise Knapp Hay, The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad (Chicago, 1963), especially ch. 6.

Richard Wilmer Rowan, The Story of Secret Service (Garden City, N.Y., 1937), especially chs. 50, 51, 55.

Norman Sherry, Conrad's Western World (Cambridge, Eng., 1971), especially chs. 20-32.

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) What does The Secret Agent tell us about the methods of Scotland Yard and its relationship with deviant groups?

(2) Is Conrad sympathetic to anarchism? What evidence do we have of his feelings and opinions about it?

(3) Describe and distinguish between the different types of anarchists portrayed in The Secret Agent.

(4) The interrelationships of Chief Inspector Heat, the Assistant Commissioner, and Sir Ethelred (the Home Secretary)

convey something about the hierarchy of authority in Victorian government. What levels in the power structure do these characters typify? What attributes are associated with each level?

(5) Explain the affinity between Michaelis, the philosophical anarchist, and his "lady patroness." Does it seem an odd association or does it make sense in the context of Victorian society?

(6) What does the Assistant Commissioner's personal effort to investigate the bombing incident--rather than automatically taking Inspector Heat's advice to put out a dragnet for the anarchists--suggest to us about Victorian concepts of justice and civil liberties in the two social classes represented by the Assistant Commissioner and Heat? Why the difference?

(7) What is the impression of London that Conrad gives us in *The Secret Agent*?

(8) What does the novel indicate about the rivalry of Great Powers, particularly Britain and Russia, in the late nineteenth century?

(9) Why did European anarchists congregate in London? How did they behave toward their host, the British government?

(10) Is Verloc a plausible secret agent? Is so, what are the apparent characteristics of the typical professional spy?

9. New Grub Street.

a. The Author.

George Gissing (1857-1903), the son of a Yorkshire pharmacist, received a grammar school education and was about to enter the University of London when he was convicted of theft and had to serve a prison term. He had stolen money to help a young prostitute, whom he later married. After varied experiences including work as a shipping clerk in Manchester, a teacher in the United States, and a private tutor to the sons of wealthy Londoners, Gissing settled down in 1879 to become a professional writer.

Gissing published over twenty novels, few of which brought in enough income to adequately support the author and his two successive wives, both from the working class and both shrewish alcoholics. From about 1895, Gissing's financial position improved somewhat, but his health deteriorated. His last years were spent in southern France with his mistress, an educated young Frenchwoman. After the author succumbed to emphysema, his mistress--who called herself his widow--survived him by over fifty years.

Gissing's books belong to the naturalistic school of writing, in which the lives of ordinary people are examined by the author objectively, scientifically, and dispassionately. The rather dreary and impoverished life led by Gissing provided the mood and many of the scenes for his novels, the best of which probably are Demos (1886), The Nether World (1889)--both "proletarian" novels--and New Grub Street (1891), a recreation of the harsh world of literary journalism.

b. The Book.

New Grub Street, published in London in 1891, has been republished in several inexpensive editions, including the Penguin edition used in this course.

Like most of Gissing's novels, New Grub Street is partially autobiographical. ("Grub Street," an actual street in eighteenth century London inhabited by poorly paid writers, found its way into Dr. Johnson's Dictionary /1755/ as an expression for badly remunerated literary work, often of low quality.) The character of Reardon, the unsuccessful novelist, is meant to be Gissing himself, although Reardon's marriage is very different from either of Gissing's. The death of Reardon --of pneumonia--is curiously prophetic of Gissing's own a dozen years after the novel was published. The other characters in the novel represent familiar types in the field of literary journalism, and some may be composites of real persons.

Although a pessimistic novel, New Grub Street is not tragic in the sense that Jude the Obscure is. Whereas Hardy seems to stack the cards against his protagonists, Gissing simply lets things happen as one would expect them to in real life. The one unrealistic episode in the book is Biffen's suicide, ostensibly because he is hopelessly in love with Amy Reardon. This unlikely development goes against the grain of the Biffen-character as Gissing has previously projected him. Tragedy also implies, as a critic of Gissing has noted, a high degree of sympathy for the unfortunate characters. Gissing clearly has no compassion for any of his characters but simply renders them photographically. On the other hand, one may question this same critic's opinion that Gissing despises his characters, even the opportunistic Milvain.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The period of the novel is from 1882 to 1886. The setting, except for the early chapters which take place in a country village, is London, particularly the districts of St. Marylebone and Holborn--within easy walking distance of the British Museum--where professional literary people preferred to live before the construction of the underground rapid transit system.

The plot of New Grub Street was intended as an exposé of the bitter competition within the literary world of late Victorian London, an intent that succeeded brilliantly. No other novel, before or since, has re-created this ethos so well. A secondary object was to show the deadening impact of poverty upon artistic creativity. Here the author is more subjective and less trenchant, for the lives of many writers--including his own--belie his argument. A valuable spin-off is the picture we obtain of a whole new segment of literary culture being fashioned for the "quarter educated," the while collar lower middle class that was beginning to pass through the new state supported board schools following the national education reforms of the early 1870s.

As the novel opens, Jasper Milvain and Edwin Reardon are struggling young literary men. Milvain, who has two unmarried sisters to support, is a journalist with little artistic talent but the ability to write the kind of slapdash, amusing prose that busy editors will buy. Reardon, in contrast, is a novelist of genuine talent, but he works slowly and painstakingly and is heavily dependent on the encouragement of others. This he does not get, for his socially ambitious wife, Amy, is constantly nagging him to churn out popular potboilers that will make money and enable them to shine in society. Reardon has acquired a mental block that is preventing him from writing well, or even writing at all. We have the clear impression that the novelist, after a couple of early successes, is going downhill, while Milvain is making valuable contacts and steadily moving upward from one small triumph to another.

We are also introduced to several other characters who will figure importantly in the story. They include Alfred Yule, an embittered literary hack; his working class wife, whom he despises; their daughter Marian, who acts as Yule's slavey in the British Museum Reading Room; Harold Biffen, a novelist who lives in the most extreme poverty while writing a naturalistic novel about a crippled grocer; and Whelpdale, a failed novelist who has turned to more successful ventures, including a prospering literary agency that peddles the manuscripts of abler writers.

The first crisis in the plot comes when Reardon's latest novel is rejected by publishers and the author is too disheartened to continue. He leaves his wife, moves into cheap lodgings, and takes a menial clerk's job, determined to write no more because he has failed. Amy goes to live with her mother, who is sister-in-law of Alfred Yule.

The next crisis occurs when the brother of Alfred Yule, a rich philistine, dies and his will divides up his fortune among his in-laws. Alfred receives nothing, but large sums are inherited by Amy and her playboy brother. Marian Yule, to Alfred's annoyance, is given a substantial amount, but before it can come to her certain of the old man's investments have to be liquidated.

There now ensues a struggle for Marian's putative inheritance. Alfred tries to persuade her to invest it in a literary magazine, which he will edit and use to finally achieve worldly success and to smite his journalistic enemies. Jasper Milvain, whose marriage proposal to a rich society woman has just been turned down, regards Marian and her money as a good second choice, as it will enable him to entertain editors and publishers and become better known. Marian is torn between her father and Jasper, who dislike each other, but in the end she accepts Jasper's proposal.

In one catastrophic chapter, readers learn, first, that Marian will not obtain the inheritance, as the business that was supposed to pay her has gone bankrupt; and second, that Alfred Yule's journalistic career is at an end, because he is going blind. Marian makes it clear to Jasper that whatever money she has must be used to support her parents. The slippery young journalist begins to find one excuse after another for postponing the marriage day.

Meanwhile, Reardon's health, always poor, is declining as he neglects to take care of himself; a death wish seems to be at work. Amy, now a rich woman, begs her estranged husband to visit her in Brighton where their child has fallen ill. He does so, finds that the child has died, and--stricken with pneumonia--has to take to bed himself. On his sick bed Reardon is reunited emotionally with Amy, and it appears that she will support him while he tries a literary comeback. But the disease is too far advanced for him to throw it off and he dies.

As the book ends, Jasper wiggles out of his engagement to Marian and instead marries Reardon's rich widow. They do not love each other but have the same practical goals: fame and fortune. Jasper is promoted to the editorship of an important journal, while Marian, to support her impoverished parents, leaves London to become a librarian in a country town.

Along the way, Biffen completes his magnum opus, but then--strangely--falls hopelessly in love with Amy Reardon and commits suicide. Whelpdale, taking leave of his flourishing literary agency, becomes the editor of a newspaper "to be read on trains" by the vast army of "quarter educated" white collar workers. He also marries one of Milvain's attractive sisters.

d. *Principal Characters*.

Jasper Milvain, an ambitious young journalist.

Maud and Dora Milvain, Jasper's sisters.

Edwin Reardon, a struggling novelist.

Amy Reardon, Edwin's discontented wife.

Alfred Yule, a veteran literary man.

Marian Yule, Alfred's daughter and research assistant.

Mrs. Yule, Alfred's working class wife.

Harold Biffen, an impoverished novelist.

Whelpdale, a literary agent.

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Carter, cheerful philistines, friends of the Reardons.

Mrs. Edmund Yule, Amy Reardon's mother.

e. *Recommended Background Reading*.

Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (London, 1957).

P.J. Keating, *George Gissing's New Grub Street* (London, 1968).

Jacob Korg, *George Gissing: A Critical Biography* (London, 1963).

Gillian Tindall, *The Born Exile: George Gissing* (London, 1974).

Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London, 1961).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) How do some of the female characters in New Grub Street, such as Mrs. Milvain (Jasper's mother), Mrs. Edmund Yule, and Amy Reardon, illustrate Victorian middle class "respectability"? Why was respectability so important to those whose social status was marginal? Why were women apparently more concerned about it than men?

(2) Cite some evidences of what we would today consider blatant social snobbery in the attitude of George Gissing toward his characters and situations.

(3) Why do characters such as Alfred Yule and Edwin Reardon--and of course the author, Gissing, himself--see the spread of literacy as threatening to traditional cultural values? Has time proved them correct in their gloomy prophecies?

(4) Is Alfred Yule's treatment of his wife understandable and justifiable in the light of Victorian social and intellectual attitudes?

(5) Do you find Jasper Milvain a totally detestable character, as many readers of Gissing believe he is? Do you think this type of person is more common in the late twentieth century than a century ago?

(6) Gissing believed that money, and especially the lack of it, has a debasing effect upon character. Show how it has negatively influenced the behavior of several of the figures in the novel. Is Gissing entirely consistent in his argument on this point?

(7) The character of Amy Reardon is said to be an excellent portrayal of a certain type of Victorian middle class woman. How would you describe this type? Have we encountered any other examples in novels read for this course?

(8) New Grub Street is an excellent exposé of the real conditions of writing and publishing in Victorian Britain--and indeed our own times. Do you find it disillusioning?

(9) "Old John" Yule, though not a major character in the novel, lurks behind the scenes as a kind of grim spirit, representative of Victorian philistinism. What was (and is) philistinism and how did it affect the cultural life of the Victorian era? How does Yule's will (he is another "will shaker," something like George Pontifex in The Way of All Flesh) implement his beliefs?

10. The Man of Property.

a. The Author.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933) was the son of a prosperous lawyer and company director who became the model for Old Jolyon in The Forsyte Saga. Galsworthy's ancestors, like those of the Forsytes, were West Country yeomen farming since time immemorial in an area overlapped by Thomas Hardy's Wessex. A public school education was followed by rather aimless years at Oxford, at the end of which young Galsworthy traveled with his brother around the world. During this round the world voyage Galsworthy met the future novelist Joseph Conrad, who was first mate on the ship the Galsworthy brothers happened to take.

Galsworthy practiced desultorily as a barrister for a few years, but his real interest from about 1895 was writing. Together with Conrad and several other aspiring writers, he became part of a literary circle dominated by Edward Garnett, a publisher's reader and critic who encouraged these young men and helped to place their work.

Like Young Jolyon in The Forsyte Saga, Galsworthy was for years dependent on an allowance from his father, which enabled him to teach himself to write by publishing several financially unsuccessful novels about middle class life. His father's death in 1904 and the huge legacy he inherited made it possible for Galsworthy to continue as he had begun, writing books, stories, and plays that represented his mature judgments without regard to the prejudices of readers. The earliest of these, The Man of Property (1906) became the first novel in The Forsyte Saga, which Galsworthy continued after the First World War.

In the meantime Galsworthy turned to playwriting about social problems such as industrial strikes, penal conditions, class antagonism, and extramarital sex. It was his strikingly dramatic plays that made the author's reputation, which was to be enhanced during the 1920s by the several best-selling Forsyte novels concerning the experiences of a single upper middle class London family.

b. The Book.

The Man of Property was first published in 1906 and has been republished innumerable times in many languages, usually together with subsequent writings in The Forsyte Saga. The Saga contains nine novels as well as many short stories connecting the novels and carrying the chronicle of the Forsyte family back into the early nineteenth century. The Man of Property was filmed in the 1940s and the complete saga was dramatized for BBC television in the 1960s.

The marital conflict between Soames and Irene Forsyte, which is the central theme of The Man of Property, parallels the real-life discord between Ada Galsworthy, the novelist's wife, and her first husband, Major Arthur Galsworthy, the novelist's cousin, whom she detested for "unnameable" reasons. John Galsworthy, in turn, was the prototype in part of Philip Bosinney, the young architect with whom Irene falls in love, and also of Young Jolyon Forsyte, whom Irene marries in a later novel of the Saga. The real Galsworthy divorce case involving Ada, Arthur, and John provided the legal background for the fictional divorce of Irene by Soames in the Forsyte novel In Chancery (1920).

The Man of Property is a brilliant social satire founded upon acute observation of upper middle class habits and manners. Characterization, even of minor figures, is excellent and often biting. The traces of sentimentalism, snobbery, and the novelist's growing social and political conservatism that creap into and weaken the later novels in the Forsyte series are not present in this early work.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The time of the novel is 1886-7. The setting is in the West End of London--particularly the Bayswater-Kensington district--and Robin Hill, a rural suburb of London.

Opening chapters introduce us to the older and younger generations of Forsytes, the former self-made upper middle class businessmen and lawyers and their married and unmarried sisters--elderly men and women in their sixties, seventies, and eighties. The younger Forsytes have grown up enjoying the wealth their fathers made and have become married or engaged to assorted types, including a few blacksheep.

Except for these latter deviants, the Forsytes and their in-laws are conventional, self-confident, complacent--and very property conscious. Three of them stand out: Old Jolyon, the most overpowering, imaginative, and successful of the elderly brothers; Young Jolyon, himself something of a bohemian (an amateur painter who once lived with a mistress) while also being solidly "Forsytish"; and Soames, a tight, narrow, somewhat mean--but very capable--man of business who is about to become a "man of property" by building an expensive country villa twelve miles from London.

The fates of Soames, his unhappy wife Irene, and young Philip Bosinney, an unconventional architect engaged to marry June Forsyte (daughter of Young Jolyon, granddaughter of Old Jolyon), soon become entwined. Soames, in order to keep the money in the family and give June's future husband a boost in reputation, retains Bosinney to design the mansion he is going to build at Robin Hill. While employed in this work, Bosinney frequently is thrown into the company of the romantic and idealistic Irene, who detests her husband; they quickly fall in love.

Months pass before smug Soames suspects his wife's infidelity, but in the meantime trouble develops between him and Bosinney over the building costs of Robin Hill. In his dedication to art and his quest for perfection, the young architect considerably exceeds his original estimates. In an exchange of letters, Soames agrees to give Bosinney "a free hand within the terms of this letter," and the architect accepts this stipuation. He does not realize that by "free hand" Soames means £50 or less, not the hundreds of pounds Bosinney assumes is meant.

Soames finally grasps that something is wrong with Irene when she demands a separate bedroom, and locks him out of their room when he refuses this request. Since he regards his beautiful wife as a valuable piece of personal property, in the same class with the impressionist paintings he is investing in, he proceeds to assume his "marital rights" and--in effect--rapes her.

Bosinney, when he learns of this treatment of Irene, goes berserk and, running amok in a dense fog, is knocked down by a bus. Soames meanwhile has brought suit against Bosinney for breaking the terms of their agreement. The case is decided against the architect the morning following his fatal accident. His non-appearance in court, and non-defense of the lawsuit, are noted critically by the Forsytes, who do not yet know of his death.

Soames's triumph in the courtroom is dashed when he discovers that Irene has left home, presumably to join her lover. She returns in agony, having nowhere else to go, soon after the dead Bosinney is identified in the police morgue by other members of the family. The novel ends with Soames closing his front door in the face of Young Jolyon, who calls to commiserate with the bereaved Irene. Soames has reasserted his "right of ownership."

d. Principal Characters.

The elder Forsytes:

Aunt Ann, 87 years old.

Old Jolyon, tea merchant and company director.

Swithin, a fat sportsman.

James, his lean twin, a lawyer.

Hester and Julia, an unmarried and a widowed sister, who live with

Timothy, a rich recluse.

Nicholas and Roger, men of business.

The younger Forsytes:

Young Jolyon (son of Old Jolyon), a stockbroker and watercolor painter.

Soames (son of James), the Man of Property.

George (son of Nicholas), a man about town.

June (daughter of Young Jolyon), a determined young woman, patroness of lame ducks.

In-laws and out-laws:

Philip Bosinney, the Buccaneer, an eccentric young architect.

Montague Dartie, a sportsman with a roving eye.

Irene, Soames's discontented wife.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

Dudley Barker, The Man of Principle: A View of John Galsworthy (London, 1963).

Catherine Dupré, John Galsworthy: A Biography (London, 1976).

Ralph Dutton, The Victorian Home: Some Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Taste and Manners (London, 1954).

Roy Lewis and Angus Maude, The English Middle Classes (London, 1949).

Esmé C. Wingfield-Stratford, The Victorian Sunset (London, 1932).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) Explain how the characteristic Victorian middle class concept of women as a kind of chattel (movable property) is illustrated in this novel.

(2) Although many doors were closed to them in Victorian society, some middle class women refused to accept the standard role of genteel uselessness without at the same time abandoning the feminine image they were supposed to project. Others threw over the image altogether and openly rebelled, not without mixed feelings. We find both types in The Man of Property. Discuss.

(3) Is Soames Forsyte an altogether disagreeable and contemptible character? Is it possible to sympathize with him?

(4) What various and different aspects of the Victorian middle class character are represented by the elderly Forsyte brothers and sisters?

(5) Irene and Bosinney are supposed to illustrate the forces of youthful rebellion among the late Victorian middle class. What qualities distinguish them not only from their elders but from conventional young people of their generation?

(6) Can Irene be regarded as a feminist or (as we would say today) "women's libber"? Discuss.

(7) Galsworthy apparently believed that people of his own generation (the same as the second-generation Forsytes') were decadent in many ways when compared with their parents. How did Galsworthy, by implication, account for it?

(8) Both Old Jolyon and Young Jolyon, while unquestionably true Forsytes, are at the same time deviants from the norm. Explain.

(9) "Every play or novel Galsworthy wrote attempted to shake the confidence of the middle-class in what it called its morality, a morality whose mainspring seemed to be the desire for wealth and the instinct of property." Discuss.

11. Ann Veronica.

a. The Author.

Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) was an author who bridged the Victorian era and the mid-twentieth century. His mother had been the servant of a Regency dandy's widow, and one of Wells's last works was a film script about the nuclear bomb. The son of an unsuccessful shopkeeper, the future author was apprenticed as a boy to a dry goods merchant. Later Wells obtained a scholarship to attend the University of London, where he studied under the eminent scientist T.H. Huxley (who appears briefly as "Professor Russell" in Ann Veronica). Several years teaching science at a grammar school ended in 1893 when the young man took up writing as a profession.

Wells's early stories and novels were science fiction, influenced by Jules Verne, including the classic The Invisible Man (1897) which has been filmed and televised many times. In these writings Wells predicted many twentieth century inventions, including the bombing plane, the tank, poison gas, the atom bomb, and the space capsule. Beginning about 1900, Wells wrote several humorous novels of everyday life, with scenes and characters drawn from his own experiences. The finest of these is probably Tono-Bungay (1908), a satirical comedy about a patent medicine millionaire. In the next stage of Wells's writing career, the author concentrated on novels of ideas in which he set forth his political and social beliefs. One of these is Ann Veronica (1909), another The New Machiavelli (1911).

In late middle and old age, Wells turned increasingly from fiction to popularized history, science, and social science. From the early 1900s onward the author made a fortune from the royalties of his forty-odd novels and multifarious other writings, especially The Outline of History (1920), a phenomenal best seller. Wells claimed to be a utopian socialist, but some of his political ideas--as will be seen from reading The New Machiavelli--were proto-fascist.

b. The Book.

Ann Veronica was published in London in 1909 after being refused by one publisher as "distasteful to the public" because of its themes of free love and women's liberation. After publication it was attacked as "a poisonous book" by John St. Loe Strachey, the editor of the influential conservative weekly, The Spectator, who was also a prominent figure in a movement known as the National Social Purity Crusade. An impression of Mr. Strachey's sentiments, as well as of the public mood with which Wells had to contend, is conveyed by this quotation from one of Strachey's editorials:

> The loathing and indignation which the book inspires in us are due to the effect it is likely to have in undermining that sense of continence and self-control in the individual which is essential in a sound and healthy state. It teaches, in effect, that there is no such thing as woman's honour. . . . If an animal yearning or lust is only sufficiently absorbing, it is to be obeyed.

Soon after this editorial appeared in The Spectator, a Rev. Herbert Bull started a Fighting Fund to finance a Watch Committee to prosecute all books "likely to bring a blush to the maiden's cheek." He received sympathy and support from the Girls' Friendly Society, the Mothers' Union, and the Y.W.C.A., and--as one observer noted--there were "echoes from pulpits and platforms and provincial librarians." All of this was reminiscent of the outcry 15 years before when Hardy published Jude the Obscure.

Although widely read before the First World War, and admired by feminists and young people of both sexes in revolt against their parents' generation, Ann Veronica is something of a period piece and has not been republished as many times as some of Wells's books. There is an Everyman's Library edition, reprinted in 1966, as well as the Penguin Book selected for this course.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The time of the main body of the novel is 1908, but the final chapter is projected "about 4½ years" into the future. The principal settings are the Stanley home in the London suburb of "Morningside Park" (probably Bromley in southeast metropolitan London), and "Central Imperial College" (presumably the Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London), where Ann Veronica Stanley is an undergraduate science student.

Ann Veronica Stanley is an intelligent 21-year-old girl who lives with her widowed father and an aunt. She is in rebellion against the stuffiness of her middle class suburban home and the meaninglessness of a life circumscribed by stereotyped feminine role-images. Her father, one of whose older daughters has embarrassed him by eloping with an actor, is determined to settle his youngest child in marriage to a "respectable" man, and in the meantime to frustrate her "unwomanly" ambition to take science courses from a famous and controversial biologist.

Ann Veronica is horrified by the thought of ending up like her oldest sister as an unhappily married and bored housewife. She is being pursued amorously by a pompous civil servant, Mr. Manning, who offers her the very kind of death-in-life marriage she is trying to escape. Manning's ethereal, fairy-tale notions of women are as nauseating as they are preposterous to young Ann Veronica.

When Ann Veronica's father forbids her to attend an art students' fancy dress dance, she leaves home and rents a room in central London. She tries to find work, but discovers that she does not have the training for the few clerical jobs open to young women. ("Can you type?") Very soon she learns that some men have another use for attractive unmarried girls. Mr. Ramage, a stockbroker who lives near the Stanleys in Morningside Park, offers to loan Ann Veronica money to continue her education, but the implication is that she will become his mistress.

Disgusted, Ann Veronica throws Ramage's money into the fire, gives up her room, and returns home. A truce is patched up with her worried father, who allows Ann Veronica to attend science classes at the university if she will "behave herself." Mr. Manning repeats his proposal (in verse) and is allowed to think there is some hope.

At the science school, Ann Veronica falls in love with Godwin Capes, a biology lecturer some ten years older than she. Capes is unhappily married and has had several extramarital affairs of which he is ashamed. He is looking for a woman who is his intellectual equal and who shares his ideals and hopes. It soon becomes clear to him that Ann Veronica is such a girl, but he is reluctant to inflict upon her the burden of his past. It is Ann Veronica who has to persuade Capes to enter into a free love relationship. He resigns his teaching post and tries his hand at writing plays. In the somewhat roseate ending to the novel, Capes not only is making money from his plays but is able to legally marry Ann Veronica after his estranged wife divorces him. Ann Veronica is reconciled with her family, and good will triumphs.

During the course of the novel Ann Veronica becomes involved with bohemians, feminists, vegetarians, anti-vivisectionists, and other faddists of early twentieth century Britain. She flirts briefly with the suffragette (votes for women) movement and is imprisoned after a demonstration. Several of the minor characters are keyed to real personages. "Capes" duplicates H.G. Wells in certain respects, especially intellectual and sexual.

d. Principal Characters.

Ann Veronica Stanley, an emancipated young woman.

Peter Stanley, her conventional father, a company lawyer.

Mollie Stanley, her old-fashioned aunt.

The Widgetts, an artistic family.

Ramage, a philandering stockbroker.

Hubert Manning, an enraptured civil servant.

Nettie Miniver, a wooly-headed feminist.

Kitty Brett, a suffragette agitator.

Godwin Capes, a biology lecturer.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

Peter Fryer, Mrs. Grundy: Studies in English Prudery (London, 1963).

Josephine Kamm, Rapiers and Battleaxes: The Women's Movement and Its Aftermath (London, 1966).

Marion Lochhead, Young Victorians (London, 1959).

Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals (London, 1931).

H.G. Wells, An Experiment in Autobiography (London, 1934).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) Are Peter Stanley's opinions of women unique to his era or generally reflective of the feelings of middle class men in western society?

(2) Compare and contrast the characters of Ramage, Manning, and Capes. What, if anything, do they have in common?

(3) How would you describe Wells's attitudes about sexual morality and marriage as implied by this novel? How do they compare with those of other Victorian authors you have read in the course?

(4) What impressions of "advanced" critics of British society and politics at the beginning of the twentieth century do we receive from Ann Veronica? Does the author generally admire or disparage them?

(5) Ann Veronica's reaction to the suffragette movement, in which she participates briefly, undoubtedly reflects Wells's own views of this extremist section of the votes for women crusade. What are they?

(6) What might be a more realistic ending to this novel than the one that Wells gives us in Chapter 17 ("In Perspective")?

12. The New Machiavelli.

a. The Author.

Herbert George Wells (1866-1946). For biographical details, see the "Briefing on Ann Veronica."

b. The Book.

The New Machiavelli was serialized in The English Review in 1910 and published as a book in 1911. An American edition was also published in 1911, and there were two new British editions in the 1920s. Penguin Books has released a paperback version, which we are using in this course.

Wells had difficulty finding a publisher for the novel because of its outspoken sexuality and the obvious identification of many of the characters with persons still very much alive. The adulterous love of the main character, Remington, for his mistress, Isabel Rivers, was inspired by Wells's own affair with the daughter of the Director of the London School of Economics. Oscar and Altiora Bailey were modeled, even physically, on Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the well-known husband and wife team of social investigators. Evesham is ex-Prime Minister Balfour, Dayton is Sir Edward Grey (Liberal Foreign Secretary), Gane is Lord Milner (a celebrated Tory imperialist), etc. The Pentagram Circle of politicians and intellectuals is virtually identical, even to the membership, with the Co-Efficients, "a brains trust with political objectives" in the words of one member, Leopold Amery ("Crupp" in the novel). Remington's political journal, The Blue Weekly, might have been either The Outlook or The Round Table, two contemporary organs of "democratic Toryism."

Wells intended The New Machiavelli to be a novel of political ideas, and some rather startling ones are set forth, although they were overshadowed at the time of publication by the sexual sensationalism of the story. The principal one, that the state should ensure the reproduction of its elites through eugenic planning, was adopted as official policy by the German Nazi regime in the 1930s. Another, state subsidization of motherhood, also instituted by the Nazis, has been taken up in modified forms by many modern governments, including Canada with its Family Allowances.

The first part of The New Machiavelli, which traces Remington's childhood and youth--rated the best part by many critics of Wells--is partly autobiographical.

c. Time, Setting, Plot.

The story takes place between the late 1870s and about 1913. (Published in 1910-1, the book is projected into the future.) The setting is mostly London, particularly Westminster, the political center, with some scenes in the London suburbs, in Staffordshire (English Midlands), and in Italy.

The first third of the book follows the life of Richard Remington from his birth in the London suburb of "Bromstead" (actually Bromley, where Wells himself was born and grew up), through his education at the City Merchants Public School and Cambridge University, to his emergence as a brilliant young London journalist with political ambitions. The son of a feckless science teacher and a piously religious mother, Remington is determined to throw off the shackles of Victorianism and to plan and govern a better society.

In Staffordshire while visiting relatives, Remington meets Margaret Seddon, a wealthy university-educated girl whom he eventually marries. Margaret has the money needed to launch the young journalist into a political career. Remington already has the contacts, including prominent Liberals and the Baileys, whose home is a salon where progressive politicians, civil servants, and intellectuals meet to exchange gossip and ideas. Altiora Bailey encourages the Remington-Seddon match, as she hopes to manipulate Remingqton after he is elected to Parliament.

Remington takes his seat in the House of Commons following the Liberal landslide of 1906. With his wife performing brilliantly as his companion and hostess, their charming house in Westminster becomes a mecca for young Liberals, threatening to rival the Baileys'. But Remington is bored by the Liberals, who seem to him to be shallow, pretentious, and timid. Gradually he gravitates toward the younger Conservatives, who seem to be livelier and more daring intellectually. Simultaneously his marriage grows stale, with Margaret failing to grow with her husband as his ideas burgeon.

During the Parliamentary debate over the People's Budget of 1909, Remington breaks with the Liberals and crosses the aisle of the House to the Conservative side. Resigning from Parliament after a quarrel with his constituents, he founds and edits The Blue Weekly, a journal of moderate Toryism and imperialism. This magazine is soon the most talked about weekly in London as Remington--assisted by Britten, an ex-schoolmate, and Isabel Rivers, an intelligent female admirer--publishes articles on the frontiers of political thought. Unknown to Margaret, Isabel becomes Remington's mistress.

Remington is soon one of the leaders of a circle of young Tories who expect to take office if the Conservatives, as predicted, win the next general election. He is reelected to Parliament in a hotly contested by-election, winning a seat that had been heavily Liberal in 1906. His future seems assured when, to the consternation of his friends, a scandal is precipitated by the disgruntled Baileys over his affair with Isabel. Remington is told firmly that he must give up the girl, and she prepares to leave him and marry one of their mutual friends. But Remington is too much in love with Isabel to let her go. He elopes with her to Italy where, in exile like the Renaissance politician Machiavelli 400 years before, he writes his memoirs and broods over his abandoned dreams.

d. Principal Characters.

Richard Remington, an idealistic young journalist-politician.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Remington, Richard's parents.

Britten, Remington's schoolmate, later assistant editor of The Blue Weekly.

Remington's "Staffordshire uncle," a crude industrialist.

Willersley, a serious young reformer.

Margaret Seddon Remington, Richard's wife.

Oscar and Altiora Bailey, a husband-wife team of social investigators, gossips, and schemers on the fringe of politics.

Isabel Rivers, Richard Remington's mistress.

Shoesmith, financial angel of The Blue Weekly, who is in love with Isabel.

e. Recommended Background Reading.

George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England (New York, 1935).

H.V. Emy, Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics, 1892-1914 (Cambridge, Eng., 1973).

Mary Agnes Hamilton, Sidney and Beatrice Webb (London, 1933).

Bernard Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought, 1895-1914 (London, 1960).

Beatrice Webb, Our Partnership (London, 1948).

f. Tutorial Questions.

(1) What differences do we detect in the political atmosphere of Great Britain as interpreted by Trollope (The Prime Minister) and Wells (The New Machiavelli)? What has happened in the intervening 35 years to bring about the change of emphasis?

(2) In spite of the changing tempo of British politics, many similarities remain between the eras of Trollope and Wells. What are some of them?

(3) Compare and contrast the political philosophies of Remingtom, main character in The New Machiavelli, and the Duke of Omnium, central figure of The Prime Minister. If the Duke were still alive and active in politics in 1910, what would be his probable reaction to Remington's ideas?

(4) Compare and contrast the two chief female characters (Margaret and Isabel) of The New Machiavelli. What relation does each have to the women's liberation movement that was beginning about the turn of the century? Would Isabel be regarded as a liberated woman in the context of the 1970s?

(5) What part does religion play in The New Machiavelli, as contrasted with its role in such earlier novels as The Way of All Flesh and Jude the Obscure? What has been happening in the generation previous to The New Machiavelli to change the status of religion and to influence the reaction to it of educated and semi-educated people?

(6) How does H.G. Wells (speaking through the character Remington) depict Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists in The New Machiavelli? Which group does he seem to admire most?

(7) Would Remington, if he were living today, find himself in such a sexual-political dilemma as he is involved in at the end of the novel?

(8) How does Wells, in the Staffordshire part of the novel, view industrialization and the industrial employer class? How do his views compare with those of Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell, writing about two generations earlier? Have industrial relations changed significantly in this time?

(9) This is the third of our novels in which journalism, and the public as readers, have been a significant element in the author's message. (The others are The Prime Minister and New Grub Street.) Compare and contrast the various ways in which these novels interpret the function and effect of journalism.

(10) Seventy-three years separate the publication dates of Oliver Twist and The New Machiavelli. Both are didactic novels aimed at middle class readers. What are some of the differences of style, tone, mood, and method that clearly distinguish them as historical documents representative of their respective periods?

PART IV. LECTURE ABSTRACTS.

A. Purpose.

Course instructors undoubtedly will want to draft their own lectures. These abstracts of lectures I have delivered to my own students are offered simply as illustrations of how information and ideas may be related to, and extracted from, specific contemporary novels. I have by no means exhausted the wealth of themes which these and other novels offer to a Victorian studies course.

B. The Abstracts.

Introductory Lecture.

Different people mean different things by the expression, "Victorian Britain." In the narrowest sense, it refers simply to the years of the reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901. Some, including your instructor, extend the period chronologically to take in the century between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the beginning of the First World War. This is a neat period of almost exactly 100 years--1815 to 1914--and happens to coincide almost perfectly with the era of Great Britain's greatest wealth, power, and influence.

Between 1815 and 1914, Great Britain was the superpower of Europe and the world: the greatest imperial power, the greatest naval power, the greatest trading nation, the "workshop of the world"--the greatest industrial power, in fact almost the only major one until 1850 or later; the site of the world's principal banking center, London; and the country whose political and constitutional system other countries believed to be most stable, and tried most often to emulate, usually without success. During this century, Great Britain was a veritable colossus. No other country even approached it by any test of strength or influence until the century was almost over.

This course about Victorian Britain is separated into two parts. During the second part, the focus is upon nineteenth century Britain as an imperial and world power, a military and naval power, a colonizer, a trading and capitalist center, a country from which emigrants departed for remote areas of the world. The course this semester concentrates upon the Victorian mind: the mood, the attitudes, the behavior, the institutions, the intellectual orientation of the Victorians. Another way to describe this course would be "the Victorians at home," while next semester we will consider "the Victorians abroad," that is, outside Great Britain and in their relationship with other countries and peoples.

The method I have chosen to introduce you to the Victorian mind in this course is through the contemporary novel, that is, novels written by British authors between 1815 and 1914 about their own times or the very recent past. By reading these novels you will be exposed quite painlessly to many facets and aspects of Victorian life, from the way children were raised and educated, to the attitudes of Victorian adults toward property, religion, politics, and many other matters. The novels are supplemented by required readings of non-fiction essays by and about Victorians.

Something should be said about the writing style and objectives of Victorian authors. In contrast to modern English, American, and Canadian fiction and non-fiction, Victorian writing is rather heavy. Sentences today tend to be short, brisk, and telegraphic. In Victorian times they were long and complex. Today paragraphs are short; in fiction, they consist mainly of dialogue. In Victorian novels paragraphs are likely to be heavy with description and the author's observations.

These qualities make the Victorian writing style somewhat difficult for modern readers to get used to. You should not be discouraged if at first it makes rather slow going. In the nineteenth century, writers had no competition from radio, television, or films. Except for Dickens and a few others, they wrote not for the ordinary working person but for the fairly well educated reader of the upper and middle classes who would have the leisure time and the interest to plunge on through their run-on sentences and weighty paragraphs, for instruction as well as entertainment.

This leads into the next important point to be made, which is that the Victorian writers, and most Victorian readers, were very serious people. They neither wrote nor read for fun. They may have read for relaxation, but they expected to profit from the experience.

One reason why Dickens was so enormously popular was that a reader could learn so much from him about people and institutions with which the reader was unfamiliar. There was no better introduction to the behavior and jargon of the Victorian underworld than Oliver Twist, one of the novels chosen for this course. In another Dickensian novel we will read, Hard Times, the Victorian reader could learn a lot about the culture of the traveling circus or carnival and its performers. All the other Victorian novels selected for this course are informative about many features of nineteenth century life, and Victorian readers usually read these books to learn about the life style of other classes and occupations as well as to pass the time without feeling guilty about wasting it.

Victorian writers not only were highly informative but tended to be preachy. They always had a point to make, generally one illustrating an ethical issue. They believed very firmly in the existence of sin and in punishment for wrongdoing, either in this life or the next and often both. No evildoer entirely escapes punishment in these books, and the writer never fails to drive home the point that good conduct produces some kind of reward. One never finds in a Victorian novel the moral relativism and permissiveness that we take for granted today. There is invariably an ethical theme, often one associated with religion or philosophy.

The preachyness of Victorian novelists puts off some modern readers, and so does the often cloying sentimentality. Some of the novels, happily, are very unsentimental. Samuel Butler's The Way of All Flesh and Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure are very modern in their use of realism, satire, and irony; but all of Dickens's novels drip with sentimentality, to the point of being indigestible by moderns, and among the Victorians were real tearjerkers. This excessive sentiment causes ridicule among twentieth century readers, and in addition to the length of the novels and their moralizing is a major reason why the novels are no longer read much outside school and university courses--unfortunately.

The best way to read a Victorian novel is to skim through it quite rapidly the first time, to pick up the story, and then to go back over it much more carefully for details about the characters, the setting, the author's theme or message, and the usually very extensive information about Victorian life and times that can be gleaned. There will be a handout for each novel, giving you some information about the author, the background of the book, the plot and setting, and the characters. In the lectures I will go into some detail about the topics and institutions upon which each novel focuses. In the first of these, Tom Brown's School Days, which we will discuss next week, the focus is upon schools and the educational philosophy of the Victorians.

1. Tom Brown's School Days.

Tom Brown depicts life at an early nineteenth century English public school. It is not a typical public school, but one of the better ones, and in any event is idealized. Why, therefore, is this novel significant? Because it was at these schools, poor as well as good, that the ruling class of Victorian Britain, and of the British Empire, were educated and their character and mental set were to a large extent formed. It was an extremely important institution.

The students at these schools mostly were from gentry families, at least before about 1850. There were also small numbers from professional families--sons of clergymen, lawyers, physicians, and army and navy officers--and a very few offspring of well-to-do manufacturers and tradesmen. Before the railroad united Great Britain in the 1840s, the public schools depended upon the patronage of local gentry families. After that the better-known and more prestigious schools became national institutions.

The gentry sent their sons to school for "character building," not "education" in academic subjects. They wanted them to be trained to become leaders of their local communities and to live a life of "busy leisure." One reason for the emphasis on study of the classics at the public schools was the belief that they were good mental discipline and introduced the boys to the ethical ideas of the ancient writers.

Most of the public schools were financially insecure, dependent on the income of endowments which, in years of depression, might be low. Fees were not high, at least until the 1840s. The prosperity of a school was affected by fluctuating enrollments due to economic conditions. Except at two or three of the more famous schools, where at one time or another there had been capital enough to construct expensive, handsome buildings, the school buildings were likely to be ugly and makeshift.

One thing believed to be essential for a public school was a country-like environment. The gentry did not want their boys to be "contaminated" by the urban working class. There was also a fear of city-bred diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and polio.

All the true public schools were boarding schools, in which the students lived at the school except during Christmas and summer vacations. They slept in large, cold dormitories and ate in a communal dining hall with the teaching staff. Some of the schools have been described as veritable pigstys. Hence parents were not encouraged to visit until conditions improved later in the century.

The teachers--known as masters--were poorly paid and little respected. Most of them were out-of-work clergymen.

Until the 1840s the curriculum was limited to Greek and Latin language and literature, mainly the memorizing of grammatical and syntactical rules and translation into English. In the 1840s Thomas Arnold introduced history and French into the curriculum at Rugby, but each for only an hour a week.

The public school curriculum was not meant to train scholars, although the more erudite headmasters, like Arnold, usually chose five or six of the brighter boys for intensive tutoring preparatory to a university education and a scholarly career. One or more of them might win a university scholarship, but this was not seen by the other boys, or even the masters, as much of a distinction. The idea was that a gentleman should have been introduced to the classics, to be able to remember a few phrases, or at worst to be able to say--like Charles James Fox--that he had forgotten them.

There were few, or no, classrooms in the modern sense. All students met their masters in the "schoolroom," a cold, drafty, barn-like room in which the various levels sat on benches, or forms: hence the use of the word "form" to denote advancement. The recitation system was used, in which the master would hear each student's lessons individually, while the others either listened or prepared their own recitations. There was little class teaching, or lecturing as we know it, unless one regards the weekly chapel sermons as lectures.

At most public schools there was a division into lower school, for young boys aged 7-9, and upper school which was broken down into six grades called forms. Students moved through the forms as fast as they could, by ability. Thus it was common to find boys of quite different ages in the same form. Many boys got stuck in the fourth form, called The Shell, spending several years there and often going no farther. There was no graduation as such, but the top form was the sixth, normally reached about age 19. Sixth formers would leave school at 20 or 21 and might go on to university, either Oxford or Cambridge.

The atmosphere at many of the public schools, even prestigeous ones like Eton, was "chaos tempered by tyranny." Most of the order, such as it was, was kept by the older boys, the masters intervening, and then with extreme brutality, only if the situation got out of hand.

Riots by most or all of the students were likely to break out from time to time, over bad food or some deeply felt injustice by the masters. These would be punished by closing the school or by wholesale expulsion. But the headmaster who could not control his boys was himself likely to be sacked by the board of governors. One reason why the masters encouraged rough sports was that they helped to rid the boys of their animal energy.

There were only two kinds of punishment, other than expulsion, used by the masters: "lines," the assigning of long passages to translate, and flogging. Often there was a choice, and the student would select flogging because it was gotten over faster. Flogging was done with a birch rod, or cane, sometimes by a student prefect or the head boy, usually by the headmaster; sometimes privately, sometimes publicly. The boy was spread-eagled, his posterior was bared, and he was given a number of thwacks commensurate with his misbehavior. The greatest recorded number was 88, administered by a notoriously sadistic headmaster. Occasionally the recipient would seek revenge, usually after leaving school, but this was very rare.

It had been customary for generations for the older boys to govern the school, subject to the masters. Whether the school government was slack or disciplined, brutal or benevolent, depended largely on the character at any given time of the older boys. Arnold modified and institutionalized this system, choosing several (not all) of the sixth formers to be prefects, or preposters as he called them. The prefects formed a kind of senate that made rules and enforced them. Arnold himself remained in the background as "philosopher king," to be approached only when advice was needed or the system broke down.

One of the most controversial institutions as the public schools was "fagging," in which young students were expected to perform duties for older boys. This system could be used brutally and viciously, for example in forcing young boys to perform homosexual acts. The expression "fag" as a synonym for homosexual is derived from public school slang. There was much homosexuality at these schools and it was rarely punished. In contrast, heterosexual misbehavior, such as using the services of a prostitute, often was punished by expulsion. Some of the masters and headmasters were notorious homosexuals. Hughes gingerly alludes to this problem in part II, chapter 2 of Tom Brown.

Life at the public schools was quite rough. Food was meager and badly cooked, baths were cold, privys were half a mile from the rest of the school and often open to the weather. Students took all this for granted and few complained.

On the other hand the life of the schoolboy was quite free and unregulated. The only compulsory activities were meals, chapel, lessons, and bedtime. The rest of the day was free and could be spent as the student wished. Much of it was spent in mischief of one kind or another, as reading Tom Brown makes clear. The public schools were not popular among landlords and farmers of the surrounding area. There was much trespassing and poaching. But the schools were popular among the villagers because they furnished employment and business.

There were no organized games at Rugby or the other public schools in Arnold's time, but much participation in unorganized ones, especially body contact sports and to a lesser extent cricket. Rugby football had its start at Rugby School, and the rules were formulated there later in the century. American and Canadian football is an offshoot of Rugby. As can be seen from reading Tom Brown, there were no teams in the modern sense. Every student could take part, and indeed was expected to.

The public schools were beginning to change in the late 1830s and the 1840s from the conditions I have described to ones in which greater emphasis was placed on scholarship and on what the Victorians called "earnestness," a serious, dedicated approach to life along Anglican religious lines. Arnold was the great pioneer of this change. Masters who served under him and students who were influenced by him carried his system to other schools in England and overseas.

2. Oliver Twist.

In this famous novel we are introduced to two subcultures of the Victorian world, the workhouse and the criminal underworld.

a. The Workhouse.

Beginning in Elizabethan times, the parish--the smallest unit of government in England--was made responsible for relief of the unemployed poor.

Until 1834, it was customary for parishes to furnish paupers with what was called "outdoor relief," something like modern welfare allowances, small sums of money enabling able-bodied paupers and their families to maintain a minimal subsistence living standard. There were also public institutions for the old, sick, and feebleminded.

In 1834, Parliament enacted a bill that was officially titled the Poor Law Amendment Act but popularly known as the New Poor Law. It instituted an entirely new philosophy of poor relief, the object of which was to discourage people from seeking help until they had no choice. In each parish, and later in larger units called "unions," an institution known as the workhouse was established. People who could not support themselves were expected to report to the workhouse, where they would be housed and required to perform menial work until jobs could be found for them or they left of their own volition. The inmates were treated as badly as possible, to discourage them from staying or coming back. This approach to poor relief was animated by the belief that people were responsible for their own poverty, and must pay the price.

We obtain an excellent view of a typical parish workhouse in Oliver Twist.

b. The Criminal Underworld.

In most industrial countries during the past twenty or thirty years there has been an increase in crime, both organized and unorganized. Writers in the press and commentators in the media sometimes suggest that this is indicative of the decline of industrial civilization. These observers are poor historians. There are cycles of lawlessness and crime, and one of the worst was during the early stages of the industrial revolution. London in the early nineteenth century was a much less safe city than New York City is today. Relative to the populations of these cities in the different eras, the incidence of crime in New York today is statistically small compared with London's crime figures of the 1820s and 1830s.

Although there are a few similarities, the reasons for crime in the 1830s and in the 1970s are mostly different. In the 1830s, the chief reason was extreme poverty directly attributable to the industrial revolution and to a population growing faster than social institutions could absorb and adjust to it.

The very rapid growth of trade and industry resulted in the mushrooming of cities in which huge numbers of poor people were forced to live together. Most of the urban poor were, in the main, honest and law-abiding, remarkably so considering their miserable circumstances. But there was a fairly large proportion who saw organized society, led by the upper social classes, as made up of enemies who intended to exploit them, and who were therefore fair game for exploitation themselves. The only way the upper classes could be exploited was illegally, since they made the rules of the game which ground down the poor.

The overwhelming majority of the criminal element in early Victorian Britain belonged to the working class, though few of these criminals did much work if they could avoid it.

There were also a few persons from the upper social classes, men and women who refused to live by the rules. A certain proportion of the "flash" criminals, the aristocracy of crime, were outcasts from the aristocratic and middle classes.

It is difficult to find accurate crime statistics for the early Victorian period. There is an interesting classification in contemporary tables of occupational distribution called "outside the labor market," i.e., people whose work could not be identified. It constituted about 35% of the male population of London. We may assume that most of these people were criminals, or on the fringe of the criminal class. There were about 1½ million persons in London in 1830, divided about equally between males and females. Thus there was the phenomenal number of some 250,000 males probably engaged in major or petty crime as a way of life. This was over twice the total population of Manchester at that time, and does not include the female lawbreakers of London. There were many of the latter, including some 40,000-50,000 prostitutes.

London was of course the criminal center of Britain, but every large town had its criminal element and its special slum where most of the inhabitants were outside the law. The latter usually was distinct from the slums populated by the law-abiding poor.

The contemporary name for a criminal slum was "rookery." In Oliver Twist we are given a vivid picture of a typical rookery. It consisted of ancient houses, many of which were substantial buildings once the property of the well-to-do. The buildings were connected by passages, some underground, others through alleys or across rooftops. The rookeries and their inhabitants were linked with the municipal sewer system, which meant that the criminals had their private access routes to the respectable slums and even the parts of the city in which the affluent classes lived. These escape routes made it virtually impossible for the undermanned police forces to apprehend lawbreakers unless the people of the rookery, or their leaders, were willing to surrender them. The case of Bill Sikes, in Oliver Twist, shows what happened when a criminal broke the code of the rookery and the police were allowed to raise the hue and cry and bring him to justice.

The rookery had a subculture all its own, with its own government and social code. It was a society within a society, comprising perhaps as much as 25% of London's total population and a similar proportion in such big towns as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow.

The crimimal class had a social structure parallel to that of the society outside. At the top were the "flash boys" or "fancy," the criminal aristocracy: gamblers, hustlers, confidence men, counterfeiters, race track touts, especially clever and successful burglars, pimps, and organizers of criminal gangs. Associated with them in the top echelon of crime were receivers of stolen goods called fences--like Fagin in Oliver Twist, based on a real person, Ike Solomon, crooked pawnbrokers or "shylocks," shady pub keepers and operators of thieves' lodging houses, "shyster" lawyers, and the bail bondsmen who were invaluable to criminals, especially the "fancy," hailed before the police courts. The next or middle level consisted of rough but capable criminals like Bill Sikes: burglars, muggers, highwaymen, thugs, and gangsters of all kinds. At the bottom were the dull, stupid, plodding adult criminals, who were taken advantage of by their brighter colleagues, sometimes surrendered to the law when a scapegoat was needed, and who filled out the criminal gangs when brawn and muscle were required. Also at the bottom of the underworld were the juvenile delinquents (an expression used as far back as 1828 in a government report): pickpockets and petty thieves, some of whom became middle level crooks or even rose into the ranks of the "fancy."

Like the rest of Victorian society, crime was a man's world, but there was a special department where women were needed: prostitution. Like the men, a very few of the rank and file prostitutes climbed the ladder, becoming "fancy women," or call girls as we would say today, for gentlemen. Some also became madams or brothel keepers. The great majority ended as Nancy does in Oliver Twist, dead at an early age of violence, drink, or disease. Until the government passed the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1860s and required the medical examination of prostitutes, the venereal diseases syphilis and gonorrhea were rampant, especially among the criminal classes.

How did the authorities react to the problems of urban crime? Until after the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 they did very little. Crime, like poverty and death, was seen as an inevitable social misfortune. The spread of the philosophy of utilitarianism, in which government was seen to have certain social responsibilities, resulted in a new attitude. The New Poor Law and its workhouse were envisaged as one way to reduce crime by making people work at honest jobs and cease to be vagrants. This was the "idle hands, sinful minds" approach to the crime problem.

Another approach was emphasis on apprehension and punishment. In 1829 Sir Robert Peel, home secretary in the Tory cabinet, created the Metropolitan Police, a paramilitary organization that became the model for urban police forces throughout the industrialized world. The police officers were carefully chosen, usually from non-commissioned ex-soldiers, then well-trained and well-paid. The chief effect of the new police force was better protection of the lives and property of the affluent from criminal aggression. It did not reduce the number of criminals or wipe out the rookeries, into which no policeman who valued his life would enter without a safe-conduct from the inhabitants.

The police officers, known from the first as Peelers, were hard working but not especially bright. There are a couple of good caricatures by Dickens in Oliver Twist. In chapter 31, Officers Blathers and Duff come to investigate the burglary of Mrs. Maylie's house. We also are given a glimpse of a typical police magistrate, Mr. Fang, in chapter 11. The police court judges were overworked, hard-bittened men without the psychological skill to distinguish between hardened criminals, and men and boys--like Oliver Twist--enticed into crime or even completely innocent.

The punishment for crime in England traditionally had been very severe, though capricious. Until Peel, in another of his major accomplishments, reformed the criminal laws in the late 1820s, the death penalty was inflicted for very petty crimes, such as shoplifting. It was not unknown--though less common in the early nineteenth century than a generation before--for as many as thirty teen-aged boys and girls to be hanged together in the afternoon after trials at the Old Bailey in the morning for offenses that today would receive merely a suspended sentence. Ordinarily death sentences were handed out only to the poor, and very haphazardly applied to them by judges with different attitudes and standards.

After 1830 commission of a murder (sometimes, also, accessory to a murder) was almost the only crime still punishable by death. A modern lawyer has noted that Fagin, who is hanged at the end of Oliver Twist for complicity in the murder of Nancy, in real life probably would have gotten off. In the novel he is punished because Dickens's proper middle class readers needed a scapegoat. It is noteworthy that in the latest film adaptation of the novel, Fagin is treated as a lovable rogue who not only escapes the hangman but walks away scot-free!

3. Mary Barton.

Mary Barton is a graphic documentary novel that illustrates several important themes of early Victorian society. The ones we will focus upon are the factory system, working class poverty, and the Chartist movement. A fourth important theme, the trade union movement, is also an important topic in Hard Times, our next novel, and will be discussed when we take up the latter.

Contrary to the picture that appears in some history textbooks, Britain was not transformed, in the space of a few years late in the eighteenth century, from a green and pleasant land into one continuous smoky factory town. (Long after the industrial revolution, many areas of Britain remained untouched by manufacturing industry.) There had been considerable light manufacturing in England and Scotland since the middle ages, and from the late fifteenth century onward England was Europe's leading producer of woolen cloth. What did happen in the late eighteenth century--or, more precisely, what began--was the change from a workshop system of production to a factory system. This momentous change gradually affected the lives of millions of people.

In the traditional workshop system of production, laborers worked either in their own homes or in small shops adjoining, or only a short distance from, their homes. Students of the industrial system, such as the famous husband/wife team of Sidney and Beatrice Webb at the end of the nineteenth century, make a distinction between cottage labor, in which all work was done by members of a single family, and workshop labor, in which craftsmen, mostly adult males, worked side by side with an employer; but both of these systems had more in common with each other than either had with the factory system, first introduced in the 1750s in Lancashire, England, for the manufacture of cotton thread.

The factory system developed following the invention of power driven machines, first for the spinning of thread and much later for the weaving of cloth. Unlike the small workshops, which could be located anywhere, the factories with their large, expensive machines had to be constructed at or near a source of power--at first water power, later coal-generated steam power.

The earlier eighteenth century factories were always set up along fast-flowing streams. After the introduction of the coal-powered steam engine in the 1780s, factories were positioned as close as possible to coal mines. Hence the English industrial revolution was concentrated in the Midlands and the north and northwest of England, where coal was plentiful. This area, previously sparsely populated, became very densely inhabited between 1780 and 1840. It was known as the Black Belt, because once the factory system was widespread the traveler from, say, Birmingham to Manchester, by road and later by railroad, was never out of sight of a factory, or at least of the dense black coal smoke emanating from a factory.

Since the first factories often were located quite some distance from the homes of workmen, the latter either had to be transported daily to the factory or relocated. At first employers would use wagons to haul the machine operatives to and from work; a twice-daily trip. This was of course a nuisance, expensive and time consuming, so the shrewd factory owner took to building cheap houses for the operatives within walking distance of his factory. This was the origin of the working class slums that characterized all the industrial towns of the Black Belt and which figure prominently in Mary Barton.

Students of eighteenth and nineteenth century British history must be cautioned not to telescope the industrial revolution into the space of a few years. It was spread out over a century and more, and affected different occupations and geographical areas at a staggered pace. As late as the 1830s the factory system, even for manufacturing cotton cloth, was far from universal. Weaving, as distinguished from spinning, was still done on hand looms in many places, and only during the next two decades--1830-1850--did weaving by power looms in large factories become almost invariable.

It was during this period--often called the Hungry Forties although it began earlier--that tens of thousands of male hand loom operatives were put out of work because many fewer hands were needed to run the power looms. It was the laying off and early retirement of these men that produced a good deal of the poverty of this period, as well as much of the working class discontent. One of the characters in Mary Barton, elderly Job Legh, is a former hand loom weaver who has been forced to retire and is supported by his granddaughter, a blind folk singer. It was no accident that the Chartist movement had a big following among weavers thrown out of work by the textile manufacturers' adoption of powered machines.

The working class poverty of early Victorian Britain must be attributed to at least two factors. First, there was technological unemployment, already referred to, in which skilled and semi-skilled workmen found that their skills were no longer needed, and that unskilled women and children--from the employers' standpoint--made better operatives of factory machines. Second, there were periodic recessions and depressions in trade to which the employers responded by immediately laying off surplus workmen and even closing a factory altogether for weeks or months.

There was, of course, no unemployment compensation or public welfare relief for the unemployed workers and their families. They had the option of waiting out the recession, in the hope of being reemployed, or of moving to another town where prospects might be brighter. These were grim alternatives, because if they stayed they faced hunger and privation, but if they moved out of the parish they lost the last hope of the destitute, the workhouse, because transients often were refused admission to workhouses. Not until British manufacturers were firmly established in the 1850s, and British textiles were selling well in every continent, was prosperity so well founded that factories were kept open year round and wages became high enough to enable working people to live above the poverty line and even enjoy occassional small luxuries.

The movement known as Chartism was aimed at correcting the abuses of the industrial system, particularly those associated with the factory and with unemployment. Again the standard textbook picture of Chartism is misleading. The impression is given that workingmen agitated and threatened public order to obtain such things as annual Parliaments and equal-sized electoral districts. These demands did figure prominently in the petitions for the People's Charter; but the demonstrators saw these political objectives simply as means to an end--the democratization of the upper class-dominated British political system--which would enable Parliament to get down to the real business of root-and-branch social reforms in the interest of the workingman and his family.

At least five of the six points in the Charter were essential if there was to be a political democracy and a Parliament heedful of working class needs. There had to be universal male suffrage, there had to be a secret ballot, there had to be abolition of property qualifications for sitting as an M.P., there had to be payment of Members, and there had to be reasonably equal Parliamentary constituencies if working class votes were to count and workingmen were to be elected to the House of Commons. The sixth point, annual Parliaments, was then felt to be necessary to give the electorate full control over its Members. All but the sixth point of the Charter are today part of the British constitutional system. It is doubtful if the Chartists, were they still living, would be very happy with the present system, although it embodies most of their purely political demands.

Chartism was a working class movement that acted outside the contemporary political system and--unlike the simultaneous anti-Corn Law agitation--had virtually no influence at the time upon either elections or legislation. The Chartist petitions that were presented many times to Parliament by delegations of workingmen, like the one described in Mary Barton, were not only ignored but treated with undisguised contempt. The British electorate was then almost exclusively upper and middle class, so that the opinions of workingmen, it was assumed, could safely be ignored.

Historians are in dispute over the ideas, the social composition, and the real objectives of the Chartists. Were they forerunners of the socialists, or pragmatic populist reformers? To what degree did violent social revolution figure in their plans? To what extent were they a genuine working class movement, rather than one under the spell of radical middle class reformers? Why did the movement fade away so quickly after 1848, the year of the last great Chartist demonstration; or did Chartism continue to exist, but under different names and with a different appearance? These are some of the questions still being asked about the only major British reform movement since the seventeenth century that has not been led almost entirely by disgruntled members of the upper social classes.

In Mary Barton we are given a half-sympathetic, half-critical impression of Chartism as seen by a middle class authoress who, rightly or wrongly, envisaged the Chartists as real or potential revolutionaries, whose threat to social order was self-evident regardless of the justice of their demands.

4. Hard Times.

There are three important background themes to Hard Times: utilitarianism, Manchester economics, and the trade union movement.

a. Utilitarianism.

Utilitarianism was a social philosophy devised by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century, in reaction against the corrupt and capricious paternalism that previously had characterized British government and the British ruling class. Its basic idea was that the happiness of the individual was all-important, so long as it did not impinge on the rights of others. The more happy and well-adjusted people there were, the sounder and healthier the society: hence the utilitarian slogan, "the greatest good for the greatest number."

Bentham was what we today would call a pragmatist: one who believes that those people get along best who apply hard common sense to their everyday problems. The practical, hard-headed man is usually the successful man. Bentham's educational theory, devised from his social philosophy, was that young people should be trained to use their common sense rather than to be guided by abstract, and perhaps irrelevant, ethical principles.

It will be seen at once that Bentham's educational theory differed sharply from Dr. Thomas Arnold's. The latter's put great emphasis upon first principles and upon living according to a fixed moral code. During the nineteenth century, the educational ideas of Bentham and Arnold were constantly at war with each other. For the most part, Arnold's classical and elitist system of education held sway in the so-called public schools, catering to the aristocracy and upper middle class. Benthamism predominated in the schools and academies--some aided by public funds, some not--attended by children of the lower middle class and of ambitious, upwardly mobile working class families. The school sponsored by Mr. Gradgrind in Hard Times is one of the latter.

Bentham and his disciples were humorless men, deficient in sentiment and lacking esthetic feelings. Bentham once said that "pushpin [a child's game] was as good as poetry" if it made a person feel contented. Hence Benthamite or utilitarian education was strictly practical and realistic. The study and appreciation of literature, painting, and music did nothing to prepare one for earning his living, so it was totally excluded from the curriculum. As Gradgrind says, early in the novel: "We are interested in facts, and only facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. We plant nothing else, root out everything else. We proceed on the princople that two plus two makes four, nothing more."

One interesting point of contrast between Gradgrind's school and Arnold's is that the former's instructors teach large classes of pupils rather than individuals or small groups, as do Arnold's. The class method of teaching was derived by the Utilitarians from the factory system of mass production, on the ground that it was quicker and more efficient. The technique of teaching thirty to forty students in a classroom, still generally used today in schools and universities, had its origin at this time and in this way.

b. Manchester Economics.

Manchester, located in Lancashire in the Midlands, was nineteenth century England's leading manufacturing city. "Manchester economics" refers to the belief held by most nineteenth century British industrialists that the size of one's profits is basically dependent on wage costs. If wages are kept as low as possible, profits will tend to be relatively high.

This idea was an offshoot of Adam Smith's system of laissez faire economics, the concept that in a free market place--free, that is, of government interference--the most efficient businesses will survive, to the consumers' advantage, while the least efficient will fail. The Manchester men believed that "efficiency" was largely relative to working the laborers--"hands" or "operatives" as they were called--as hard as you could, and paying them as little as possible. One of the principles of Manchester economics was that food costs should be kept very low so that working people could obtain what they needed at minimal cost. This was not out of sympathy for the undernourished laborers, but simply so that they could be paid less. The employers' campaign for cheap food evolved into the anti-Corn Law movement of the late 1830s and the 1840s.

Another contribution to Manchester thinking was Malthusianism--a grim doctrine devised at the end of the eighteenth century by the Rev. Thomas Malthus--which taught that population will expand uncontrollably so long as there is plenty of food. If working people are paid too much, it was said, they will squander their money on luxuries: "turtle soup and gold spoons," according to Mr. Bounderby in Hard Times, or on gin and beer as the temperance people believed. Worse yet, they will have too many children. With a high birth rate there will be more laborers than can be employed, and the middle class taxpayer will have to pay for their poor relief. From this idea stemmed the conviction that pauperism--as distinguished from poverty--should be made as disagreeable as possible; hence the Victorian New Poor Law and workhouse.

c. The Trade Union Movement.

Manufacturers naturally detested and fought the early trade union movement, because if successful it would have given the workingman a weapon to use to improve his pitifully low wages. There were several waves of trade unionism, each of them broken by the employers supported by the government.

The first of these waves was during the early French Revolutionary Wars when organizing workingmen was identified with the revolution and hence with treason. The second was at the close of the Napoleonic Wars, and it too was brutally suppressed as a threat to established society. The next came in the 1830s and merged into Chartism, the political and social movement that is part of the background of Mary Barton, our last novel. All these attempts failed because the upper classes, and hence the government, feared revolutionary upheaval, as well as because of the self-interested opposition of the employers.

Therefore by the 1850s union organizers were learning to keep a low profile and to concentrate on organizing workers factory by factory for strictly limited objectives--especially higher wages and better working conditions. Most employers were still harshly unsympathetic and used the lockout, scab workers or blacklegs, and the blacklist of troublemakers to fight back, usually successfully. Bounderby, the factory owner in Hard Times, uses the blacklist. Stephen Blackpool, one of his "hands," finds it difficult to obtain a new job after being sacked because his name has been circulated.

It will be noted that both Dickens, in Hard Times, and Mrs. Gaskell, author of Mary Barton, reveal themselves as distrustful of unions, although they definitely sympathize with the laborers. In part this was due to a sound skepticism of the motives of some of the union organizers, who--then as now--were corrupt and exploited the trusting and uninformed workers. The demogogic Slackbridge in Hard Times is painted by Dickens as a man not to be trusted, and simple but shrewd Stephen Blackpool does not trust him. Then too, the novelists, like the employers and the government, were genuinely fearful of social revolution. There had been such a revolution in Europe as recently as 1848, with much violence, bloodshed, and property destruction. The middle class Victorian reformer was a gradualist, not a revolutionary.

If workingmen were to shun unions and not strike against the employers, how were they to better their conditions? Neither

Dickens nor Mrs. Gaskell has a very clear or satisfying answer. Apparently they believed that the affluent classes should change their ideas and adopt new principles. What were these to be? Some students of Dickens's writings believe that he was animated by what they call "the Philosophy of Christmas," as a result of which the employer, reformed in spirit, would not only change his attitude toward his "hands" but voluntarily give away some of his wealth to help the less fortunate. The classic example of such a person in Dickens's works is Ebenezer Scrooge of A Christmas Carol. Something like this also happens to Mr. Carson, the employer in Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton.

In real life a few--a very few--industrialists were converted to the Philosophy of Christmas. Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish-American steel manufacturer, at the end of his life became a philanthropist who endowed public libraries throughout the English-speaking world. William Lever, an English soap tycoon, built model towns for his employees. Other well-known examples of millionaire-philanthropists come easily to mind. But the great majority of big businessmen had no such change of heart. Without pressure upon them--from the unions below and reformist governments, influenced by public opinion, above--it is hard to believe that average Victorian businessmen, raised in the school of Manchester economics, would have done very much for their employees. Although prosperity in the 1850s and 1860s meant better wages for some laborers, conditions remained very bad for the majority until well into the twentieth century when the pressures referred to at last forced employers to give their workers a better deal.

5. The Way of All Flesh.

It is extremely difficult for a late twentieth century reader to appreciate the mood of The Way of All Flesh because our vague, loose, and permissive attitudes toward religion and morality are so very different from the structured, formalized, and strict attitudes of nineteenth century middle class Englishmen. Therefore we must try to put ourselves in the place of people living during the 1840s and 1850s in a society still dominated by religion. Only thus can we begin to understand the way characters in the novel might have felt about religion and the value system derived from religion.

Today most of us, if we are religious at all--and many of us are not--conceive of religion in the most abstract terms. Those of us who believe in God, which most people still do in a confused sort of way, think of the deity as very remote and disinterested. This view of God was called Deism in the early nineteenth century, and was in very low repute. It was almost as bad as atheism, or total non-belief in God. The average middle class Englishman--and here we are talking about this class only, since the religious attitudes of most of the working class were probably not unlike our own today--would have felt grossly insulted if you had called him a Deist.

To these devout Victorians, God was immanent--present--in all acts of life. Everything one did was seen by God, and He kept a reckoning of good and evil acts and thoughts. The popular expression was that "not a sparrow shall fall unknown to God."

There was a sharp difference of opinion among the religious denominations about whether God planned the fall of each sparrow. Some argued that the sparrow, and the human individual, had free will, that is, could pursue his own life style with appropriate reward or punishment at the end. Others, including the Presbyterians, some Methodists, and some of the Anglicans known as Evangelicals, contended that each individual was predestined to behave in a certain way, and that God had already, before the person's birth, decided whether he would be rewarded or punished in the afterlife.

In any event there was an afterlife, in which every practicing Christian believed explicitly. It was taken for granted, whether one believed in predestination or not, that after death he would go to either Heaven or Hell. To go to Hell was very bad indeed, for it meant an eternity of the most awful punishment for one's transgressions during life. The Victorians had a terribly clear picture of Hell alongside a rather blurry one of Heaven. In The Way of All Flesh, Christina Pontifex, on her deathbed, begs for reassurance from her husband and son--both clergymen--that she will not go to Hell, of which she is desperately afraid. She is not frightened of death itself.

The strong belief in an afterlife, and especially in the existence of Hell, must have been a tormenting experience for these people, one that we find almost impossible to appreciate. Many Victorians must have proceeded through life constantly in dread that bad behavior, as they reckoned it, would mean certain consignment to Hell. The agony must have been especially severe for those, like the Pontifex parents in The Way of All Flesh, who believed in predestination. To realize this enables us to sympathize somewhat with characters who otherwise might seem obnoxious, even despicable.

This dark, foreboding view of religion had enormous impact on childhood behavior. Evangelical Protestant parents like the Pontifexes were terrified that their children might turn out badly and be condemned to everlasting punishment. They assumed that all children came into the world bearing the stigma of sin. This doctrine of original sin was a very powerful one among Victorian Christians, especially the Evangelicals who sincerely believed that bad behavior by a child was certain proof that it would go to Hell, or at best spend millenia in Purgatory, the dismal waiting room to Heaven.

What was bad behavior? Today we realize, thanks to three generations of professional child psychologists and popularizers like Dr. Spock, that the natural child is a little animal who will behave crudely, and often cruely, like other species of little animals. This no longer worries most parents. Perhaps it does not worry them enough. But in the 1830s a "bad child," that is, one that threw tantrums or, even more disturbing, refused to obey, was seen as having one foot in Hell.

Obedience was the all-important test. It was taken for granted that parents, having been raised themselves for twenty or more years in the true faith, knew what was morally right. Therefore a child had to accept their version of rightness. He had no title whatsoever to an opinion of his own. Thus a child that disobeyed his father in the smallest detail was sinful.

There is an especially grueling incident in the novel, in which Ernest, a little boy of five or six, is asked to sing a hymn, and is unable to pronounce the word "come." After he mispronounces it three or four times, he is whipped by his father for disobedience. The whipping horrifies the narrator, who is a Deist with no use for such cruel disciplining of children founded on a distorted religious belief. Yet this kind of thing was common practice in middle class Victorian homes.

This brings us to the role of the father in the Victorian family. He was seen as a kind of surrogate God, completely omnipotent and unchallengeable. His position was sanctioned not only by Holy Scripture, especially the Old Testament, but by custom. He was a patriarch: all younger males in the family and of course all females of any age were under his jurisdiction. The Victorians had a much greater respect for age than we do today. Hence if a father in his thirties visited or was visited by his own father, a man in his sixties, the older man unquestionably took precedence. Theobald Pontifex might be a tyrant in his own small family, but when his father came to call Theobald quivered and quaked in his boots.

The mother's role was to be the vessel that bore children, and to help to raise them: nothing more. She was her husband's good right hand, but had no right to an independent opinion of her own. Christina Pontifex fills this subordinate, inferior position perfectly. She even bears tales to her husband about her own children when they foolishly confide in her.

Since Victorian women were trained from the cradle upward to believe unquestioningly in their natural inferiority and dependence, they were less unsure of their role than were their brothers. We do find scattered examples in Victorian fiction of middle class women who had minds of their own and were determined to be independent. Aunt Alethea in The Way of All Flesh and Sue Bridehead in Jude the Obscure are instances, but they had to wage a powerful uphill fight against social prejudice. Most women never made the effort, or even wanted to. More of the Victorian attitude toward women's role has survived into the late twentieth century than of their religious beliefs or methods of child raising.

It was much harder to be a male child in one of these Victorian families. A boy supposedly was being trained for the time when he would be a man: when he must be independent and have to make decisions himself. Yet he was given no opportunity to experiment, to discover his real strengths and weaknesses. There was inevitably a conflict, a generation gap between fathers and sons, that frequently has been examined in nineteenth century fiction. The Way of All Flesh is perhaps the most famous example in English literature. There are several instances in Russian literature, especially Ivan Turgenev's Fathers and Sons (1862), and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov (1880).

Because of this generation gap, illustrated in The Way of All Flesh by the relationship between George and Theobald Pontifex, and in the next generation between Theobald and Ernest, middle class men often bore through life a terrific burden of guilt derived from their subconscious dislike and jealousy of their fathers. These feelings they could never consciously acknowledge, even to themselves, for to do so would have been "sinful." Freudian psychiatry began to investigate these guilt obsessions late in the nineteenth century. Samuel Butler antedated Sigmund Freud by a decade or two when he made the generational conflict the keynote of this novel, emphasizing that guilt weakens and almost destroys his character, Ernest Pontifex.

I have referred several times to the Evangelical movement within the Church of England, which included much of the Anglican laity as well as clergy until well past 1850. This movement had begun in the late eighteenth century with the object of reforming and purifying the Church of England, which had become quite lax in both organization and doctrine. The Evangelicals were influenced by the Nonconformists outside the Church of England, particularly the Wesleyan Methodists who had seceded from the Church after about 1740.

The Evangelicals emphasized salvation by faith rather than as the result of good deeds or faithful performance of sacraments. Like the Nonconformists they believed strongly in the literal interpretation of the Bible, which was to be preached to the people and reiterated in home worship. By 1820 this Evangelical or "low church" influence had widely permeated the Church of England. It had a powerful effect on the value system of Victorian England, and--while it affected all classes--was especially identified with the Victorian middle class.

In the 1830s a countermovement opposed to Evangelicalism--variously called Tractarianism, Ritualism, Anglo-Catholicism, and the Oxford Movement--began to take form. The Ritualists believed that the Evangelicals were making Christianity too difficult for the ordinary Christian, who needed more help than he was getting in aspiring to spiritual perfection. This help was to be gotten from the sacraments and from a priesthood clearly distinguished from the laity. Some of the Ritualists, most notably John Henry Newman, carried their movement to its logical extreme of reunification with Roman Catholicism, but most of them stayed in the Church of England.

In The Way of All Flesh, Ernest Pontifex, raised in an Evangelical or "low church" home, reacts against this parental influence once he escapes from the nest. At Cambridge University he is drawn to the Simeonites, an extremist sect on the Evangelical fringe which actually existed. Later, after he becomes an ordained curate, Ernest swing the other way, toward the Ritualists. In the end, confused by theological diversity and disillusioned by the apparent irrelevance of the Church to real life, he drifts into agnosticism. His plight, and his eventual destination, parallel those of his creator, Samuel Butler, and many of Butler's intellectual peers.

6. Jude the Obscure.

One of the things that Thomas Hardy is attacking in Jude the Obscure is the English class system, with its aristocratic and upper middle class snobbery, its contempt for the so-called "lower orders," and its indifference to the honest aspirations of ambitious working people. Jude Fawley in the novel represents the thousands of bright boys and girls who had the misfortune to be born poor, and who had little hope of rising to a higher social or economic level because of lack of opportunity and advantages, especially educational.

Yet we must not make the mistake of thinking that the nineteenth century English class system was a closed one, and that there was little or no social mobility. On the European continent there were many countries with truly closed class systems, especially Russia and Germany. It was virtually impossible, in either of these two nations, for a workingman to ascend into the lower middle class; the few that did were most unlikely to rise any higher.

This was not so in Britain, where many workingmen "improved themselves," as the saying went in those days. An excellent example is Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, whose father was a village postmaster and his grandfather an agricultural laborer. Robertson joined the army as a private in 1877, worked his way up to sergeant, and was awarded one of the few officer's commissions available to talented soldiers in the enlisted ranks. Extraordinary perseverance and ability enabled this man to overcome the snobbery of fellow officers and gradually advance up the hierarchy of rank to the very top.

There are many other cases of Victorian social mobility in all walks of life, but especially in business. The industrialist who began life as a factory hand and ended it with a knighthood or even a peerage was not unfamiliar. Mr. Carson in Mary Barton, George Pontifex in The Way of All Flesh, and even Bounderby in Hard Times, are instances in Victorian literature of the well-known "self-made man."

But what is equally clear is that for every factory operative or carpenter's son who became a boss, there were thousands who lived and died in near poverty, at least some of whom had abilities that never were given a chance to develop. Jude Fawley is meant by Hardy to represent these thousands of obscure but talented men. Another example of this type, luckier and happier than Jude, is Job Legh, the self-educated workingman in Mary Barton, an amateur botanist who corresponded with scientists and professors but remained a humble laborer to the end.

In a democratic, wide-open class system such as we have in twentieth century Britain and in most modern industrialized countries, both Jude and Job would have been enabled, through government assistance, to attend university, receive a formal training in an academic discipline, and become professional men with middle class social standing. They would have acquired the economic rewards accompanying their professional and social rank.

Victorian England's class system, while far from democratic in this modern sense, at least left the door ajar. Who managed to pass through this half-open door? Men like Carson, Bounderby, and Bitzer, another character in Hard Times; men who, in the words of Jude Fawley, were "cold, hard, ruthless men, without sentiment or feeling." Described more objectively, they were egoistic, self-disciplined, and opportunistic men, with an eye on the main chance and complete dedication to their own advancement.

Although Victorian England's was not a genuinely mobile society, it was not one that placed much weight on formal credentials--such as diplomas and university degrees--as we do today. If one could somehow slip past the class barriers, brains, character, and practical ability might carry one a lot farther than they will, under comparable circumstances, in the twentieth century. Hardy, if he had wished, might have written a very different novel about Jude Fawley, the talented stone mason. There is no reason why Jude, if he had conquered his weaknesses for strong drink and wild women, could not have become a master mason, even an employer, whose savings would have enabled him to travel, to study, and finally to send his sons to university--as did George Pontifex, for example.

There were only a few nineteenth century vocations for which educational credentials were needed. One of these was the Anglican priesthood, the profession Jude wanted to pursue. Since the late seventeenth century, and until after the First World War, the Church of England clergy was confined almost exclusively to the gentry and upper middle classes. Because a degree from either Oxford or Cambridge was required for ordination as a priest of the Church of England, and because the education of clergymen was still regarded as the principal function of these universities, barriers were raised to the admission of poor young men as university students.

As we saw in The Way of All Flesh, a few scholarships and some miserable bursaries were reserved for talented and pious undergraduates from poor families, but a strong recommendation from the parish clergyman was a prerequisite. Jude Fawley might have gotten one of these references if he had been a steadier and more orthodox person, but his personality and family history were not in his favor. Jude might also have become a Nonconformist minister, for which no educational credentials were then needed, but he was too convinced an Anglican to take this road which lay open to him.

As the novel indicates, the universities were beginning to liberalize their entrance requirements in the late 1860s. More scholarships were made available, and--equally important--one did not need to be the nominee of a bishop or priest or (after 1871) even an Anglican to be offered one. New universities were being founded, "redbricks" as they were called, for the education of the growing middle class and the ambitious in the working class.

Besides the four Scottish universities, long open to anyone able to pay the fees and intellectually equipped for matriculation, there had been a secular university in London since the 1830s, four "university colleges" in Wales after the late 1870s, and one of the latter in Manchester beginning in 1880. Most of the newer university establishments admitted "external students" who could study for degrees part time without having to attend lectures. Hardy fails to point out that Jude Fawley, if he had wanted to and known about it, could have gotten a bachelor's degree from the University of London by self-study. But of course he could not have become a clergyman.

The other major target at which Hardy aims is the marriage code, which he believed forced a great many couples who were not really happy with each other to live together in misery for all or most of their adult lives. He offers the examples of the intellectual Jude and the coarse barmaid, Arabella; and also Sue Bridehead and Mr. Phillotson the schoolmaster, who were sexually incompatible. We also have the cases of Bounderby and Louisa, and Stephen Blackpool and his alcoholic wife, in Hard Times; and Ernest Pontifex and Ellen, another alcoholic, in The Way of All Flesh.

Until 1857, the legal divorce of unhappily married couples was possible only by a special act of Parliament, which only the wealthy or socially powerful could hope to obtain. In 1857 Parliament enacted a statute establishing a special Divorce Court, before which a husband or wife could sue for termination of their marriage. But this process still required a lot of money, and the only grounds were adultery, desertion, or--in the case of women suing men--cruelty. It was also much easier for a man to divorce a woman than the reverse. We see, in Jude the Obscure, that both Jude and Phillotson had to dip into their savings to pay lawyers and court costs when they got their respective divorces. There was, of course, always a stigma surrounding divorced people in the Victorian era, as is clearly shown in Jude.

It is hardly necessary to add that not only adultery of married persons but free love between unmarried persons was treated with great severity by both law and public opinion. Adultery was an actual crime until 1857, although adulterers were rarely prosecuted. After 1857, a man could still seek punitive legal damages against another man who had had sexual intercourse with his wife, but a wife had no such right against her husband's mistress. Disobeying the marriage code was easiest for the very rich and the very poor, especially if they were city dwellers. It was the people in between, such as those depicted in Jude the Obscure, who were persecuted as sinners, and sometimes prosecuted as criminals, if they did not conform.

Finally, a word or two should be said about the National Schools, which employ several of the characters in Jude the Obscure. These were elementary schools managed by the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, an agency of the Church of England, and financed by Church funds and a government subsidy. Thousands of National Schools were to be found throughout England, Wales, and Ireland. Usually they were the only schools in a community in which working class and lower middle class children could obtain an elementary education.

Until after 1870, as we have seen, there were no secular, state-supported schools in Great Britain. The National School teachers, who had to be Anglicans, were trained in Teacher Training Colleges like the one Sue Bridehead attends, and is expelled from, in the novel. In return for government assistance, the National Schools--as well as other private schools receiving aid--had to submit to government inspection. One of the much-feared visits by Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools is depicted in the first chapter of Hard Times, and there is another inspection incident in Jude the Obscure.

7. The Prime Minister.

Anthony Trollope's The Prime Minister is the first of our novels in which we are introduced to the high governing class of Victorian Britain, from which most cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, diplomats, and upper-level bureaucrats were selected. As late as the 1890s, the majority of cabinet ministers, even in a Liberal government, were titled members of the peerage.

The Prime Minister gives us a good insight into the politics of the early 1870s, the mid-Victorian period. Although the suffrage, the right to vote, had twice been expanded--in 1832 and 1867--to take in large new groups of voters, the British electorate was still far from being democratic. According to simplified textbook history, the Great Reform Act of 1832 gave the vote to the middle class, and the Reform Act of 1867 gave it to the industrial working class. Neither oversimplification is really accurate.

There were nearly 20 million people in Great Britain in 1832, but after the Great Reform Act fewer than 700,000 males--and of course no females--could vote in Parliamentary elections. Obviously a great many lower middle class men, and almost all workingmen, were still excluded. Of the total male population in 1832, more than nine out of ten had no vote after the Reform Act.

By 1867 the population had risen to over 30 million, and as a result of the Reform Bill of that year the electorate rose to about 2 million male voters. Assuming that there were roughly 15 million males in Great Britain at that date, 13 million (many of whom, of course, were children) were still disfranchised. Therefore the proportion of the disfranchised had diminished from 90% in 1832 to about 80% in 1867--not much of a drop, even if allowance is made for the many obviously underage.

Although some skilled artisans and some of the better paid factory operatives--men like Jem Wilson in Mary Barton--could vote after 1867, millions of male laborers and white collar employees still could not. It was not until 1884 that any serious effort was made to democratize the electorate. There was nothing like universal male suffrage until 1918, or universal female suffrage before 1928. Britain did not become a politically democratic country until well into the twentieth century.

Knowing this, we can understand why Parliamentary politics was for so long a vocation closed to all but the traditional governing class--aristocracy and "squirearchy"--plus those members of the upper middle class who were interested in politics, or who had non-political interests that might be promoted by legislation or access to government. Before 1884 at the earliest, there were not enough lower middle class and working class voters to make it worthwhile to the governing parties to democratize the electoral system. There was no point in trying to communicate, through party organization and propaganda, with people who had no share in the system.

In 1874, the date of the novel, British party organization was still very rudimentary and informal. In Birmingham and a few other industrial cities, forward-looking politicians, especially in the Liberal party, had begun to organize party machines, or caucuses, something like those in American cities. But even in these places there were not enough poor, working class voters for tightly-knit machines--like those in the United States, in which votes were delivered in return for welfare--to be practicable.

In national politics the party, insofar as it existed at all in the modern sense, was a Parliamentary party: a group of M.P.'s and peers with similar political views, who chose to cooperate to govern the country in a certain style approximating to the labels Liberal or Conservative, and when not governing to criticize the party in power. The individual M.P., elected by a narrowly restricted franchise in his constituency, was still a very independent person, so independent that sometimes it was impossible to give him a party label based on his votes in Parliament.

The editors of Dod's Parliamentary Companion, a politician's reference book, usually assigned party labels to M.P.'s according to the clubs to which they belonged rather than how they voted. If a man belonged, for example, to the Reform Club, the chief Liberal club, he was assumed to be a Liberal even though his voting record might be more Conservative than Liberal. William E. Gladstone, the great Liberal prime minister of the late nineteenth century, had begun his political career years before as a Conservative or Tory. As a young man in the early 1830s he had joined a Tory club, the Carlton. Gladstone was reckoned as a Conservative by Dod's as late as 1865, although by then he had been chancellor of the exchequer in a predominantly Liberal cabinet for six years.

The men's social and political clubs, which were almost all identified with a party or a political tendency, were very significant in Victorian politics. It was here that the party leaders met to determine Parliamentary strategy against their opponents. It was at the clubs that M.P.'s were mobilized to vote in Parliamentary divisions: "whipped in," as the phrase went. This was a hunting term, referring to the whipping in of the hounds in a fox hunt. Since most of the clubmen were country gentlemen who hunted for recreation, it was natural to apply a hunting expression to Parliamentary politics. The post of party whip--whose function, even today, is to insure that the M.P.'s of his party show up to vote--was not unlike that of the whipper-in of a hunt party.

Today the party whips are in no doubt about who belongs to their party. After each election it is easy to calculate party standings, and it is rare for there to be any question about which party will form the government. This was not true in the 1860s and 1870s. Not only was there uncertainty about the affiliation of many M.P.'s, but there was not yet a two-party system. (In fact, there rarely has been a true two-party system in the British Parliament, although political science textbooks like to speak, misleadingly, of the "classic British two-party structure.")

In 1874 there were four recognizable parties in the House of Commons: the Conservatives (still sometimes called the Tories), the Liberals, the Radicals, and the Irish Nationalists. Since the Liberals and Radicals--who were left-of-center independent reformers--usually voted together, they are generally lumped together in the history textbooks. At the time, those who understood politics made no such mistake, for the Radicals were not subject to the Liberal whip. The Irish Nationalists, who were committed to home rule for Ireland (a form of self-government something like Canada's "dominion status"), held aloof from the other parties, throwing their weight behind the one promising the best terms for Ireland.

If neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives won a clear majority of House of Commons seats in a general election--as often happened--there had to be some hard bargaining to construct a government representing a majority of the Commons. Although there were no actual coalition governments during the 1870s like the Duke of Omnium's in The Prime Minister, there had been such governments in the two previous decades, and there would be again in the late 1880s and the 1890s. In 1874, the approximate year in which the story takes place, there was real talk of a coalition of Conservatives and right-wing Liberals to prevent the Liberal reformer Gladstone from taking office again. This coalition was not necessary, because the Conservatives unexpectedly won a Parliamentary majority. In the novel, Trollope creates a fictional situation in which the Conservatives fail to win the hoped for majority, and a coalition has to be constituted to enable the Queen to have a government.

In the novel there is an election campaign in the borough of Silverbridge, a fictional constituency. Silverbridge is a "pocket borough;" a constituency in which a local nobleman or squire--in this case the Duke of Omnium--had the traditional right to nominate the M.P. After 1832 this practice was, if not actually illegal, frowned upon, but even so there continued to be quite a few pocket boroughs. These were mostly small rural communities where the great magnate did his market business, hired his servants, and was the landlord for many of the inhabitants. It is easy to see how he could tighten the screws to force the electors to vote for his man, often his oldest son or another member of his family. The local electors were usually pleased to approve the landlord's candidate, for generally they admired the family and looked to it for leadership in making political decisions.

In The Prime Minister, the Duke of Omnium--despite his noble title, rather an "advanced" Liberal--refuses to exercise his hereditary right to nominate the M.P. for Silverbridge. The electors are confused, uncertain whether to follow the lead of the Duchess, who supports Ferdinand Lopez, the disreputable Liberal candidate, or to vote for the Conservative, a popular young squire. There is no doubt that if the Duke had put his weight behind Lopez he would have been successful, even though the voters do not respect the man.

Trollope implies in The Prime Minister that the aristocratic system of politics described above was gradually--even quite rapidly--breaking down. The very fact that there is a contest in Silverbridge is proof of this. In the past pocket boroughs were not contested. In the next novel in the Palliser series, The Duke's Children, Omnium's oldest son and heir, Lord Silverbridge, is elected to the seat without opposition. But young Silverbridge breaks another one of the old rules by rejecting his family's Liberal partisanship and declaring himself a Conservative. Personal ideology has triumphed over family tradition.

Some of the political issues mentioned in The Prime Minister are surprisingly modern: the pressure to build larger and more expensive armaments, whether to give Ireland more self-government, even the question of replacing pounds, shillings, and pence with decimal coins--not actually done until 1971! There is talk, as there was in the real House of Commons in the 1870s, of giving the vote to more electors, which would mean--although few politicians realize it--a wholly different kind of politics. The Duke of Omnium is aware that this might happen. He can envision the day when his traditional style of politics will be obsolete, and he is prepared to stand aside for younger, more flexible men. But he is not willing to change his own behavior.

Nevertheless, some of the trends of the times anger, worry, and disgust the Duke. He does not approve of many of the younger politicians in his own and the opposition party. The muckraking radical press, in the hands of opportunistic editors from the lower middle class, is stirring up class bitterness. The editors are not ashamed to use despicable methods; even, as in the novel, blackmail. The more reputable politicians and editors no longer regard politics as a custodial obligation, but as a battlefield for competing ideologies and policies.

The Duke, and other characters in The Prime Minister, also are concerned about the infiltration of rich capitalists into the traditional landed and professional classes, and thence into politics. A minor character in the novel, Mills Happerton--a rich stockbroker with many financial and political interests at home and abroad--illustrates this class of nouveaux riches whom the old aristocracy and middle class distrust.

Even more threatening are the out-and-out adventurers like Ferdinand Lopez: men who have the appearance, speech, and manners of gentlemen, but who obviously do not share the old social values. Like many other middle class Englishmen of his day, Trollope was mildly anti-semitic. Lopez is clearly depicted as not only a scoundrel but a Jew. He, as well as other Jewish characters in Trollope's novels, is seen as disreputable in part, at least, simply because he is a Jew and a "foreigner."

8. The Secret Agent.

Anarchism and socialism (sometimes called communism, with a small "c") were the two principal anti-establishment ideologies of the late Victorian era. Both are still with us today. Socialism has become the official doctrine of many national states, and even capitalist countries have been deeply influenced by socialist ideas, some of which have been adapted to public policies.

Anarchism, in contrast, is still an anti-establishment doctrine. It had a powerful effect upon the New Left and student radical movements of the 1960s, and today is espoused by such rebels against society as the Weathermen and the Symbionese Liberation Army in North America, Italy's Red Brigade, and the Japanese Red Army. Terrorist organizations on the fringe of nationalist movements--for example the Irish Republican Army, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Québec Liberation Front (F.L.Q.)--have imbibed large doses of anarchism.

No government has committed itself to anarchism, and it is unlikely that any ever will, because the basic principle of the anarchist philosophy is abolition of the state and its replacement by voluntary and functional relationships between groups and individuals. For example, if anarchism were to become Canada's official ideology, all levels of government, from the cabinet and Parliament in Ottawa to the village board, would be done away with. In their place, groups of people--friends, neighbors, and fellow workers--would voluntarily organize self-governing communes which would buy and sell to each other, exchange labor services, and in general be mutually helpful. Anarchism is a very idealistic doctrine, for it assumes that people are naturally unselfish and altruistic but are corrupted by existing social and political institutions. Once these institutions are wound up, the state in particular, people will resume their innate goodwill toward each other.

In the nineteenth century, the leading anarchist thinker and activist was Michael Bakunin, a Russian exile and principal rival of Karl Marx for the leadership of the International Workingmen's Association. This First International, as it is known to historians, was a federation of anti-capitalist trade unions and other groups dedicated to ending capitalism, either peacefully or by revolution. Although he had been a revolutionary as a young man in the 1840s, Marx had become--by the late 1860s--a gradualist committed to achieving power by elections and parliamentary means within the framework of the existing state: what we would today call a democratic socialist. Bakunin, in contrast, believed that only violent revolution and the total destruction of the state would end capitalism. During the 1860s and early 1870s Marx and Bakunin, and their followers, fought for control of the International, and Marx won. The anarchists were driven out of the organization and, after the death of Bakunin, split up into a number of small and competing factions.

Some of the different kinds of anarchists active in the 1880s and 1890s are represented by characters in The Secret Agent. Karl Yundt represents the terrorists, who believed that anarchists must express their detestation of capitalism and its political agents by violent acts, such as blowing up public buildings, assassinating politicians and industrialists, and disrupting industry and trade by disorderly strikes. (Many of today's political terrorists derive inspiration from this type of anarchism.)

Conrad's character Michaelis typifies the very different philosophical anarchists, who were convinced that capitalist society was so corrupt and decadent that it would soon disintegrate without outside pressure other than the force of ideas. Once capitalist society has collapsed, anarchists must be ready to replace it with the voluntary associations already described. Michaelis, who is lionized by society people toying with leftist ideas, had a real-life counterpart: Prince Peter Kropotkin, an exiled Russian nobleman converted to anarchism, who lived most of his adult life in Britain.

"Comrade" Ossipon, another figure in The Secret Agent, illustrates two anarchist types: the scientific and the communal. Scientific anarchists were something like their philosophical brethren in that they objected to separate acts of violence. Instead, they contended that anarchists should meticulously plan and prepare for the day when capitalism would be irreparably weakened by war or depression and could be toppled by a general strike of all workers. The strike might produce considerable violence, but it would be of short duration. The scientific anarchists were more structured than the other varieties. They were ready to constitute a new social and political elite to take the place of the capitalists and lead the new society as a dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin and the early Soviet Communists drew some of their organizational methods and revolutionary tactics from the scientific anarchists.

Ossipon also represents the communal anarchists. These anarchists believed that existing society should be exploited so long as it survived by "brothers and sisters" of the movement banded together into communal groups. Commune members would accept work from the capitalists and bourgeoisie but would refuse to take responsible positions in capitalist society. They would share their earnings with each other, and also pilfer and steal from their emtloyers when there was opportunity. The youth communes of the 1960s and early 1970s were exponents of this type of anarchism.

Finally, there were the nihilists, characterized in the novel by The Professor. They believed that only after, and as a result of, the violent and total destruction of capitalist society could a new social order be constructed to replace it. Destruction would have a purifying effect, just as fire purifies by burning. Bombing and arson were, understandably, the favorite destructive media of the nihilists, and individuals were urged to take action on their own. In The Secret Agent, The Professor, who is an explosives expert, is happy to supply his bombs to anyone who asks for them. He is himself an ambulatory "infernal machine," with his hand always poised upon a detonator in his jacket pocket.

It is easy to understand why anarchism--much more than socialism--horrified orthodox Victorians, especially public officials responsible for law preservation and the protection of prominent persons. Beginning in the early 1880s, anarchists--both organizations and individuals--successfully carried through the assassination of many heads of state and other statesmen and public figures, starting with Tsar Alexander II of Russia in

1881. During the next twenty years, a French president, the king of Italy, and President McKinley of the United States were among the statesmen murdered by anarchists.

There had been several active terrorist associations in Russia which had given the government's security services much concern. After the murder of the Tsar there was a repressive crackdown. Many of the Russian anarchists fled to the West, to London especially but also to Paris, Switzerland, and the United States. The Russian secret police found that it had less control over the anarchists' activities after they had dispersed. Therefore the Russian government sought the cooperation of foreign governments in keeping track of the anarchists, or--better yet--securing their imprisonment or expulsion from the host country.

It was assumed that if the anarchists could be kept on the move they would be unable to organize effectively and plan acts of terrorism. Not all police officials shared this theory. Some of them believed that it was better to know exactly who the anarchists were, where they were at any given time, and to infiltrate their organizations with secret agents and police spys. Thus terrorist acts could be forestalled. The two conflicting viewpoints are represented in The Secret Agent. Mr. Vladimir, the Russian diplomat--really a secret service officer--favors the arrest and dispersal technique. Inspector Heat, the Scotland Yard man in charge of anti-anarchist measures, prefers the infiltration tactic. Paradoxically, the same man, secret agent Verloc, is called upon both to infiltrate the London anarchists and to act as an agent provocateur who will break up and disperse their cells.

The treatment of anarchism presented the British government with a dilemma. Traditionally the British had welcomed exiles from despotic foreign governments. The British governing class prided itself on its liberalism, a contrast to the authoritarianism of most of the continental states. At one time, in the 1830s and 1840s, the British government had even unofficially sponsored radical and revolutionary movements in certain continental countries. Tsarist despotism was especially despised in British official circles, the more so as Russia was Britain's chief international rival until the late 1890s. Since most of the anarchists and anarchist groups were either Russian or from one of the subject Russian nationalities, such as the Poles, the British government was reluctant to expel them from British soil. Besides, British intelligence services used the anarchist groups as channels for espionage and counterespionage against Russia.

We have noted that there were admirers of philosophical anarchism among British intellectuals, even in the highest social circles. Several members of the British aristocracy, including titled peers, were themselves philosophical anarchists. (One such noblewoman was a mistress of the Prince of Wales.) Certain of the Russian anarchist exiles, notably Prince Kropotkin, belonged to the nobility and mixed with their British social equals. Some of the respectability and chic of philosophical anarchism was transferred to more humble anarchists of a quite different stripe.

The British Liberal party, led by William E. Gladstone who hated any kind of despotism, was officially sympathetic to these exiles. As long as it was in power, civil servants and police officials who believed in repression of anarchism were not listened to. In The Secret Agent, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, who belongs to the British aristocracy and is not a career policeman, represents this liberal, anti-repressive point of view. Differing with him is Chief Inspector Heat, the professional policeman, who sees the anarchists as dangerous social deviants and has no idealistic illusions about them at all. Heat prefers common English criminals--thieves and housebreakers--to the anarchists, whose social and political ideas he cannot understand and does not want to.

Standing between these two poles is the home secretary, Sir Ethelred. Although himself a member of the Liberal establishment, he knows the government will be discredited if there is an anarchist assassination or major bomb outrage. He also is worried about the manipulation of the anarchists in Britain by agents provocateurs controlled from the Russian embassy. Behaving like a true politician, the canny Sir Ethelred passes the buck to his subordinate, the Assistant Commissioner. The latter is ordered to use his own judgment, with the implication that if he is wrong he will get the sack. Much of the plot of The Secret Agent is about how the Assistant Commissioner skillfully extricates himself from this predicament.

9. New Grub Street.

New Grub Street is about writers and journalists, especially about the clash between those writing for a popular audience and those writing for the well educated and discriminating. One of the points that the author, George Gissing, is making is that the spread of education results in the general decline of literary and journalistic standards: a point that those who agree with Gissing are still making nearly a century later. This deterioration can be attributed to the fact that publishers are businessmen influenced by market conditions. If the marketplace is filled with "quarter educated" people--to use Gissing's expression--then only books and articles these customers can and will read are likely to be released by the publishers.

Until about 1880 it was assumed that people who read were not only reasonably well educated but--perhaps as important--had a long attention span. That is, they were expected to be sufficiently interested in a topic to read a long, dense, and rather complex paragraph, and to repeat this process until the writer had finished his piece. After about 1880 publishers and writers gradually came to realize that this traditional style of writing, based upon the two assumptions respecting education and attention span, was no longer selling as well as a writing style that used simple, colorful words, short paragraphs, and ideas that were clear and not too difficult.

Why was this? The principal reason was that during the past decade--1870-1880--the new state-supported "board schools" had been turning out tens of thousands of literate but, by earlier standards, poorly educated young people. These youth had about the equivalent of a twelfth grade education in the Canada or United States of the 1970s. (I should note, parenthetically, that in the past century educational standards have further deteriorated, to the point that twelve years of formal schooling are now needed to bring pupils to the level of accomplishment that required only six years in the 1870s. Most first-year university students in Canada have about the same reading skills as a thirteen-year-old English school-leaver in 1875.)

These newly-educated working class and lower middle class youth of the 1870s liked to read, much more than do high school and university graduates of our own "media age." But their reading comprehension was slow, they did not like to reread a difficult passage, and they wanted to read material that was interesting and not too demanding intellectually. This change in the character of the reading public revolutionized publishing in Great Britain.

We have already seen that Great Britain was the last major European country to establish a publicly supported system of compulsory education. The French and Germans had taken this step over fifty years before. It was not until 1870 that the British Parliament passed the Forster Act, which provided for elected boards of education in every English county and borough. These bodies were empowered to set up and manage elementary schools that pupils would be expected to attend to the age of thirteen.

Pupils did not have to attend the board schools, as they were called, if their parents preferred to send them to other kinds of schools. Aristocratic and upper middle class families continued, as they do to this day, to place their sons and daughters in exclusive private boarding schools like Tom Brown's Rugby. Less affluent parents who did not want their children to mix with those of the working classes sent them to private grammar schools and academies which the pupils attended as day students. There were also, in many localities, the Church of England's National Schools, comparable to the board schools but with compulsory religious education as part of the curriculum.

The establishment of the board schools everywhere in England had an extraordinary social and economic effect, for they enabled working class children to become literate and thus to qualify for white collar jobs. To a much greater degree than today, the privilege of wearing a collar and necktie separated the social classes in Victorian England. A working class boy who could read could become a shop assistant, an office clerk, or even a minor civil servant. A working class girl who could read might become a governess or a teacher, or--more important for most--might be sought in marriage by a young man of the lower middle class.

Since business and government were expanding very rapidly, there were many openings for these newly educated young people. They had more leisure than their peers who continued to work at blue collar jobs, leisure in which to read. Publishers were quick to see what was happening, and to furnish the books, magazines, and newspapers the new readers wanted.

It had been customary until the 1880s for publishers to prefer writers of fiction who sent them manuscripts for novels of two or three volumes, selling to the public for--in 1979 currency--about $10 to $15 the set. In New Grub Street, we find Reardon, an unsuccessful novelist, struggling to turn out one of these "triple deckers," as they were called. Obviously only quite affluent people could afford to buy one of these long, expensive novels.

For the less well off reading public, there were chains of private circulating libraries, of which the most successful and well known was Mudie's Select Circulating Library. For an annual subscription of about $10 in today's values, a subscriber to the lending library could borrow one volume at a time, replacing it with another as fast as he could read them. There were relatively few public libraries at this time, although one of the New Grub Street characters, Marian Yule, obtains a job as librarian in a country town. Not until after the turn of the century--especially after the American millionaire Andrew Carnegie began to endow British public libraries--did the free public library replace the private circulating library.

The multi-volume novel was losing popularity in the 1880s because of the growing numbers of "new readers" produced by the board schools. Not only was the cost of these novels far too high, but even the expense of a circulating library subscription was more than the average clerk or shop assistant could afford. Besides, these readers did not have the patience to stay with a novel for three long volumes. Hence the one volume novel of about 250 to 300 pages began to be popular with readers. It was not liked by writers because, while the work of writing one was almost as difficult as for a two or three volume novel, the proceeds were much less, as is made clear in New Grub Street.

With the new readers in mind, publishers began to issue cheap, one volume editions of older novels, such as those of Dickens, as well as books by contemporary writers. These cheap editions, with cardboard covers, sold for as little as one shilling, or about 50¢ in today's purchasing power. They were sold in bookstalls along the street or at railway and bus terminals. These stalls, which also sold newspapers and popular magazines, made one enterprising businessman, W.H. Smith, a millionaire, enabling him to enter politics and eventually become a cabinet minister.

In New Grub Street, one of the characters, Whelpdale, becomes editor of a popular newspaper called Chit-Chat. This name obviously is a parody of the real newspaper Tit-Bits, which was started by the publisher George Newnes in 1887. As Whelpdale remarks in the novel, the paper was intended for people who travel on trains and have only a few minutes in which to complete their reading. (Lord Salisbury, the prime minister, was less charitable than Whelpdale. These papers, said Salisbury, were published "for office boys by office boys.") All the articles were very short, containing no more than four colorfully written paragraphs, about human interest topics that would attract the new readers. Previously, newspapers had stressed political and foreign news and had been directed to serious, well educated readers. Articles had been long and detailed, and took time to read.

Another publisher, Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe, in 1888 started a rival to Tit-Bits called Answers. It consisted of nothing but letters and inquiries from readers, and replies by the newspaper staff, along with many illustrations, cartoons, and comic strips. On a grand scale it resembled today's syndicated newspaper columns by Abby Van Buren, Anne Landers, and similar writers. Like Tit-Bits, Answers soon acquired a huge circulation.

These innovations were extremely disturbing to writers of the old school, represented in New Grub Street by the novelist Reardon and the scholarly journalist Alfred Yule. Reardon, whose novels are pessimistic as well as hard to read but have qualities of real distinction, is having a poor time selling his better books. He cannot force himself to churn out the potboilers wanted by his publishers. Yule, who writes long, turgid, and pedantic articles for serious magazines, is no longer in much demand and has to work twice as hard to make the income he once made with less effort.

In contrast to these two, there are Whelpdale, who abandons writing to become first a literary agent and later an editor, and Jasper Milvain, whose short, snappy, and shallow articles are just what the editors now want. In the end Milvain himself becomes an editor of a literary review, and we know that the old fashioned, serious magazine is doomed. This is what really happened in the publishing world at the turn of the century. Serious journalism for the general reader almost disappeared. In its place there were popular magazines for the "quarter educated" and "little magazines" for the literary cliques: in effect, writers writing for other writers.

10. The Man of Property.

Although the outcome of one of its sub-plots is tragic, The Man of Property is essentially a comic novel, in which the author pokes fun at some of the weaknesses and foibles of the Victorian upper middle class, while making clear his basic admiration and respect for this class.

This novel is like Trollope's The Prime Minister in being a critical study of the manners of a social class, but it does not share Trollope's somewhat defensive social conservatism. Like The Way of All Flesh and Jude the Obscure, it takes some very effective potshots at sacred cows, but it lacks Butler's bitter sarcasm and Hardy's bleak sense of tragedy. On the other hand, Galsworthy's novel is not a caricature of middle class life as is Hard Times and several other novels by Dickens. The Man of Property is a realistic, genuine, and humane "slice of life," appreciative of the good and evil to be found in every class and institution.

There are two themes in The Man of Property that should be examined from the perspective of social history. One is the rise of the affluent upper middle class to a level equal to that of the aristocratic gentry and nobility in every material respect, although the latter still had social precedence, and the great increase in total number of the high bourgeoisie over the years but especially in the nineteenth century.

Traditionally the European middle class had existed to serve the aristocracy as merchants, lawyers, doctors, priests, and teachers. In many parts of late nineteenth century Europe--for example Russia, Austria, and Spain, and to a lesser degree Germany and Italy--the middle class still performed this limited role. But in England since the commercial revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, middle class people had become economic entrepreneurs and had secured a high place in society based on money, alongside the traditional place reserved for landed wealth.

The open class system of England enabled the especially wealthy and successful members of the upper middle class, if they wished, to actually join the landed gentry or even--if they had the right connections--the nobility. Superficially all that was necessary to pass into the gentry was to buy a manorial estate in the country; take up some of the leisure-time pursuits of the gentry, such as riding and fox hunting; send the male children to a public school; and hire the College of Heralds to devise a coat of arms, which they were always glad to do--for a price.

In The Man of Property, we see amusingly illustrated the ambivalent attitude of the upper middle class to the trappings of gentility. Swithin Forsyte, one of the elderly brothers belonging to the first generation of the family to become affluent, would like to have the image of an aristocratic sportsman. He takes to dressing like a Regency dandy and drives a smart carriage. He even approached the College of Heralds, but in the end--unwilling to pay the exorbitant fee demanded for a proper coat of arms--he simply appropriates the part of it he likes and has it mounted on his carriage and embossed on his writing paper.

Soames Forsyte, a younger member of the family, takes the more drastic step of buying country property, but he is careful to buy land only twelve miles from London that he knows he can dispose of quickly, in a seller's market, if it turns out to be unsatisfactory. (As events unfold, his caution proves to be justified.) Soames also emulates another aristocratic trait, the collection of works of art, but he shrewdly appraises each painting for its investment value, not its intrinsic beauty.

Except for Swithin, the older Forsytes think that emulating the gentry is foolishness. James--Soames's father--ridicules his son's country house until it is made clear to him that it has excellent resale value. Old Jolyon sent his son to a public school, but regrets having done so because--he thinks--it weakened the young man's character both morally and pecuniarily. Young Jolyon not only lives with a mostress, but he gave up a good job to paint watercolors.

We also see in the older Forsytes a bit of the lingering inferiority complex of the nineteenth century English middle class. Old Jolyon is sensitive about his social origins. His father was a humble house builder who liked his pot of ale, only a step or two economically--and not even that socially--above John Pontifex, the village carpenter in The Way of All Flesh.

In spite of his great financial success--he is the Victorian equivalent of a modern millionaire --Old Jolyon still thinks the Forsyte are, in his words, "just small beer." His brother James is just as sheepish about the family past. After one quick visit, James refuses ever to return to the little rural village where the Forsytes used to farm the land. We have here one reason why even very wealthy middle class Victorians hesitated to become country gentlemen: they feared the scorn of their prospective neighbors, aristocrats like the Pallisers and the Fletchers in The Prime Minister who know the family background of all their friends, and who will not count a man as a friend if his background is at all suspect.

The second major theme of The Man of Property is the uncertain role of women in late Victorian upper middle class society. There had been an extraordinary change in the status of middle class women during the nineteenth century. In earlier centuries the middle class Englishwoman, like her working class sisters, had more often than not worked beside her husband. Sometimes she contributed to the family income by taking outside employment. If widowed, she helped to carry on her late husband's business. This tradition was especially strong among middle class families belonging to the Nonconformist denominations.

About the turn of the century this active, workaday role was replaced by what a modern feminist has called the "feminine mystique," in which the ideals of gentility, dependence, and economic uselessness came to be fostered. Partly this changed concept of women was attributable to the middle class's aping of the gentry. It was assumed that women of the aristocracy were genteel and wilting creatures whose place in life was exclusively decorative. This was a misconception of the life style of the aristocratic female, as we know from Trollope's excellent portrayals of such characters as the Duchess of Omnium in The Prime Minister. But misconception or not, it had a powerful effect upon middle class attitudes.

Another source of this nineteenth century view of women's place was in religion, particularly in the evangelical belief --denounced so forcefully in The Way of All Flesh--that woman was man's distinctly subordinate helpmate. Whatever the roots of the notion of female gentility, and there were others besides these we have mentioned, it was the predominant attitude among middle class Victorians, women as well as men. It was strongly upheld not only by public opinion, that is, the opinion of the people who counted in society, but by the law.

As we have seen from previous novels we have read in this course, the law was definitely unsympathetic to Victorian women who wanted a greater degree of freedom and social usefulness.

Even after divorce became practicable in 1857, the law still discriminated against women. Until 1873 a woman separated from her husband ordinarily lost custody of her children, even if the husband was manifestly incapable of caring for or raising them. Up to 1882, when Parliament adopted the Married Women's Property Act, a husband obtained complete control of his wife's property upon marriage and kept it even if they were separated or divorced. This is why Abel Wharton in The Prime Minister ties up his daughter's inheritance with all kinds of legal strings, so that her rascally husband, Ferdinand Lopez, cannot get his hands on it. "Old Jolyon" Forsyte also takes pains to insure that a future husband will not misuse his granddaughter June's legacy. At one point in The Man of Property, the author observes that one of the old brothers got his start in business from money he might not have had if the Married Women's Property Act had been in effect at the time.

Far in the distance was the idea--still quite radical even in the 1970s--that following the breakup of a marriage family property should be divided up equally, or at least equitably. Even the Married Women's Property Act gave little protection to women like Irene Forsyte, Soames's wife, who was penniless when her husband married her.

Soames, it is clear, regards the beautiful and accomplished Irene--she is a skillful musician--as a decorative piece of chattel property. When not enhancing the decor of his attractive town house, or the mansion he is building in the suburbs, Irene is expected to perform the only other important function of a middle class woman--bearing him a son. Even more anxious for an offspring to inherit the family property is old James, Soames's father. In a later novel in Galsworthy's Forsyte Saga, Soames mercifully deceives his father on his deathbed by telling the old man that his second wife--this is after Soames has divorced Irene--has given birth to a boy, when actually, to Soames's chagrin, it is "only" a girl.

Victorian men who took this functional view of women, as Soames does, rarely gave a thought to the sexual aspect of their relationship, or to the possibility that the woman might not want to bear a child, or if she did, might not want to bear her husband's child. Such is the case with Irene. It is never made quite clear just why she finds Soames repulsive, although we are given some clues. She is warm, idealistic, and artistic; he is cold, materialistic, and philistine. He collects art masterpieces, but to him they are equivalent to blue chip shares or gold bars.

Soames is so smug and blind that he has no idea what disturbs his wife. Months pass before he is even vaguely aware that she is in love with his architect, and he never fully appreciated what has happened. When light finally dawns, he attributes

Irene's infatuation to an upset liver, his universal explanation for any physical or emotional aberration.

Irene, and her lover Bosinney, are trapped by both the law and their financial circumstances. A decade earlier, when "Young Jolyon" ran off with his children's governess, he had the money to support her. Although society frowned on their liaison, they managed to live quite comfortably. Bosinney is penniless and in debt, and in addition eccentric. Irene is also destitute and too honest even to take the jewels Soames has given her, and which he is willing to let her keep when she leaves home. Irene and Bosinney are, in effect, destroyed by the Protestant Ethic, which has encouraged a system of legal and social sanctions to protect property and the home, the assumption being that the marriage contract--whatever its ethical implications--is a business contract like any other.

11. Ann Veronica.

Ann Veronica, is the next to the last of our Victorian and Edwardian novels. The time of the novel's plot is 1908, some seventy years after that of Hughes's Tom Brown and Dickens's Oliver Twist. We have come a great distance from these earlier writers, not only in years but in social behavior and attitudes. H.G. Wells's heroine is a young woman university student who seduces a male teacher. Clearly Edwardian Britain is a different world from that of Rose Maylie, Louisa Gradgrind, Christina Pontifex, and other constricted and repressed middle class females of the early Victorian era. Ann Veronica Stanley is a much happier--and it must be added a much luckier--young woman than Hardy's Sue Bridehead or Galsworthy's Irene Forsyte, her precursors in the movement for women's liberation.

It was frequently noted by contemporary writers of the 1880s and 1890s that a "new woman" was beginning to emerge, despite the outspoken disapproval of Britain's most influential woman, Queen Victoria, who declared that one young feminist "ought to get a good whipping." On another occasion the Queen was quoted as "being anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write in checking this mad folly of women's rights, with all its attendant horrors, on which [my] poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety." Notwithstanding such influential opposition, legislation such as the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 was making it possible for women to be more independent, if they wished.

The Education Act of 1870, and subsequent amending acts, were also important, as they enabled women to receive a free--and eventually compulsory--basic education, as well as providing thousands of teaching jobs that were no longer dependent, as in the days of Jude the Obscure, and Sue Bridehead, on a religious test. Almost as valuable to women as this legislation was a technological development, the invention of the typewriter. For some inexplicable reason men disliked--and in the 1970s still dislike--using this machine, possibly because they have less physical dexterity than women. Whatever the reason, young women began to be hired by businessmen as typists beginning in the late 1870s, and soon they were being introduced into the lower levels of the civil service. This was probably the true birth of the "career woman," although some date it to the admission of women to the nursing profession in the 1860s.

The greatly increased number of clerical and service jobs, usually paying low wages, that were open to women made it possible for young, and even middle aged, females to have a modest degree of independence if they wanted it. Another mechanical invention helped to advance women's liberation in the late 1880s. This was the pneumatic-tire bicycle, which replaced the old metal-tire "bone crusher" of the previous two decades. The invention of the modern bicycle had many social effects for both men and women. It gave both the sexes greater mobility, both transportation-wise and socially. A bicycle was an expenditure that many working class people, as well as those of the lower middle class, could afford. It enabled them to circulate much more than they could on foot or using public transportation, and to mix with people of other than their own neighborhood and social class.

Class mobility was also facilitated by changing dress styles resulting from the bicycle. For the first time in modern history both men and women of the middle and working classes while bicycling wore indistinguishable garments: the men the so-called sack suit, bought off the rack in ready-to-wear clothing shops; the women the relatively short, loose bicycle skirt and separate blouse (called a shirtwaist) patterned after men's shirts, which did not require the elaborate undergarments otherwise affected by Victorian middle class women. The new clothing styles were spoken of in contemporary periodical literature as being very daring and even indecent, and in terms of the prevailing codes of sexual behavior they probably were.

Many feminists--"women's libbers" as we would call them today--believed that the emancipation of women was moving too slowly at the turn of the century. Their panacea was to give women the vote which, it was rather naively assumed, would open all doors and demolish all barriers to full equality of the sexes. Even so lucid a thinker as John Stuart Mill, the philosopher and economist, was certain that this would happen, and it was he who--while briefly a member of the House of Commons--introduced the first women's suffrage amendment to a franchise reform bill in 1867. Mill was probably a poor choice for this honor, as he was living with a woman who was not his wife and everyone knew it. Consequently his amendment was greeted hilariously, although he drew 73 votes when the House divided.

Most Victorian males, even highly educated ones, were convinced that women were unqualified for the vote for one reason or another. Even the great biologist and evolutionist Thomas H. Huxley--whom H.G. Wells studied under, and who appears briefly under the fictional name of "Professor Russell" in Ann Veronica--was very hostile, arguing that women represent a lower stage of biological evolution than men. So few men were willing to aid the campaign for women's suffrage, and those that did so frequently were eccentric, that the early suffragist organizations preferred to ignore the male sex, except in Parliament where their votes were regrettably essential if anything was to be done.

Yet it was male politicians who, for completely pragmatic reasons, took two important steps in the late 1880s that gave women an entering wedge into politics. The first of these was to allow women property owners, benefitting under the Married Women's Property Act, to vote in local elections. This was enacted by a Conservative government in 1888 with the object of ousting the Liberals from control of local government bodies. The reasoning--correct as it turned out--was that most of these propertied women would vote Tory and help to offset the newly enfranchised male workingmen who were likely to vote Liberal. Even before this date, propertied women had been permitted to vote in school board elections, the idea being that women should have some voice in local policy making concerning children.

The second important step, also taken by the Conservatives, was to enroll women of the upper and middle classes as election canvassers. As we saw in Trollope's The Prime Minister, this had been done informally for some time. In 1883, the Corrupt Practices Act made it illegal to pay election workers. The Tories reasoned that the best people to employ as unpaid canvassers would be well-to-do women who knew something about politics and had done a certain amount of genteel politicking in their drawing rooms and garden parties. In 1885 the Conservative party established its ladies' auxiliary, the Primrose League, and the Liberals followed suit with the Women's Liberal Federation a couple of years later.

There is no doubt that involvement in party politics and local politics helped to educate feminist leaders in the political arts. Mrs. Millicent Fawcett, one of Britain's pioneer suffragists, was the adoring widow of a Liberal party politician and cabinet minister. Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, founder of the militant Women's Social and Political Union (usually called the "suffragettes"), began her political career as a canvasser for her husband, a Liberal M.P., and as a member herself of a parish board of guardians responsible for poor relief.

There are several chapters in Ann Veronica that focus upon the W.S.P.U., the suffragettes. This organization was intended to do for women what the Irish Nationalist party--especially in the days of Charles Stewart Parnell in the 1880s--had done for the Irish: to arouse so much public interest through shocking and outrageous acts that the politicians would never again be able to look the other way when the women's suffrage issue was raised.

Certainly the suffragettes succeeded in attracting public attention. Their tactics included violent demonstrations--one of which is described in Ann Veronica; physical attacks on well-known politicians such as David Lloyd George or Winston Churchill; danaging pictures and sculptures in art galleries and museums; setting fire to mail boxes and public buildings; and even suicidal gestures like jumping in front of the King's horse in the Derby Day horse race.

Wells, through his characters in Ann Veronica, has some caustic things to say about the suffragettes and their methods, although he sympathized with feminism generally. He depicts one of his suffragette characters, Kitty Brett--who is modeled upon one of Mrs. Pankhurst's militant daughters--as an intellectually irresponsible, shrewish zealot. Wells suggests that Kitty Brett is a suffragette not because she wants to promote the rights of women, but because she hates men. Wells clearly believed that the antics of the suffragettes were hurting their cause, and we cannot escape the inference that--like some of the young student rebels of the late 1960s, and the terrorists of the 1970s--the protagonists did not really want to succeed, for if they did they would have to stop struggling against the abstract enemies who were more meaningful to them than the cause they nominally espoused.

In any event women's suffrage bills were regularly defeated in the House of Commons year after year in the decade before the First World War, although a Liberal government was in office many of whose ministers supported the principle of votes for women. It was not until 1918 that married women and those over 30 were given the ballot, ostensibly as a reward for women's contribution to the war effort but more probably because these housewives, teachers, and stenographers were seen as docile creatures who--if they troubled to vote at all--would be inclined to vote for one of the right-of-center parties rather than the socialistic Labour party that was about to become the official Opposition.

The politicians were not far wrong, for the Conservatives were in power for all but three of the 20 years between the two world wars. Even the extension of the franchise to young women over 21--the so-called "flappers"--in 1928 did not liberalize the electorate very much if at all. Nor did issues of special interest to women receive very much more attention from the law makers than in the days when all of the latter were men.

The governments these women helped to elect, and the parties they voted for, were slow to admit women to the upper levels of political power. Only one woman held a cabinet seat before 1945, only a handful were junior ministers, women M.P.'s numbered only a dozen or so at most, no woman could sit in the House of Lords, and no woman entered the decision-making upper ranks of the civil service or the foreign service until after the Second World War. Women's suffrage was certainly no cure-all leading to the social, economic, or political equality of the sexes.

The code of sexual and marital behavior was greatly relaxed--or slackened, as old fashioned people claimed--as the Victorian era drew to a close, but little of this could be attributed to the feminist movement. The great solvent of most of the Victorian hangups our novelists were concerned about was the First World War, which may be considered the true watershed between their age and our own.

12. The New Machiavelli.

The New Machiavelli is the third political novel we have discussed in this course, the others being The Prime Minister and The Secret Agent. Like the former novel, The New Machiavelli is almost exclusively about the world of high politics, the people who govern and make public policy. In these two novels we see very little of the effect of government and policy upon the ordinary people of Great Britain for whom laws are enacted and social and economic programs implemented. Wells's book, like Trollope's, is a study of a political elite isolated to a remarkable degree from the lower social classes it governs.

The isolation of the British governing class in 1910 as in 1874 was due to the simple fact that the nation, and in particular the electorate, were in no sense democratic. As I pointed out in the lecture on The Prime Minister, even after the Reform Bill of 1884--which gave the vote to many workingmen--tens of thousands of men, and all women, were still excluded. For instance, all transient laborers who did not own a home or permanently occupy a dwelling, were denied the vote until 1918. Therefore there was a sense of unreality about British politics until after the First World War. Governments were still occupying themselves with issues such as Irish government or reform of the House of Lords in which the general public took practically no interest. At the same time other issues, such as education and drink control, were being settled in ways of which the working class public did not approve. Foreign and imperial affairs were conducted with almost no concern for the wishes, or even the interests, of the average man and woman.

But after allowance is made for the continuing remoteness of the British governing class from its subjects, it is clear to readers of these two novels that British politics and political issues had changed in the generation between 1874 and 1910. In the earlier year Britain and its rulers were strongly committed to laisser-faire capitalism and free trade, with the state limiting itself to the role of policeman or watchman. The generation after 1874 experienced intense foreign competition and a chronic depression at home that undermined faith in traditional capitalism. To the more intelligent and well-read among the political elite, especially those who came of age during this generation, it appeared obvious that if Britain was to retain its primacy as a great power, the state--that is, the government--must assume a much more positive role than in the past. The name given by many of the younger politicians and political journalists to the interventionist state they envisaged was "socialist," a label that in the past had been contreversial and even disreputable.

The socialist state, as distinguished from the laisser-faire capitalist one, must take responsibility for planning and directing trade and industry, for economic development, for integration of the empire, and for social planning. It was no longer enough, as in the Duke of Omnium's time, to debate whether or not to give self-government to Ireland, or whether or not the navy needed two or three new battleships, although these matters were still of some importance. Government must now decide if there should be imperial tariff preference, if unemployed workers should be paid to emigrate to Canada or Australia, if working people in Britain should be insured against sickness and injury and given old age pensions, and many other similar social and economic issues.

In terms of ideas, politics became much more interesting, and we find this reflected in The New Machiavelli, a much more intellectually stimulating book than Trollope's political novels, brilliantly written as these are. Although Wells was writing for the generation of 1910, many of the issues he took up--for example, the social function of women--are still timely and being debated nearly 70 years later.

However different the ideas and issues of 1874 and 1910, the techniques of practical politics are much the same. Besides being restricted to the comparatively well-educated and well-informed, and to the socially prestigious and affluent classes, political strategy is still being conducted in the clubs, the private drawing rooms, and the country houses of the members of these classes. The Pentagram Circle, the private dining club in The New Machiavelli, is more intellectually oriented and mentally lively than the Progress Club in The Prime Minister, but the same kind of people belong. Altiora Bailey's political salon in *The New Machiavelli* discusses the latest socialist nostrums, but as in the Duchess of Omnium's elaborate parties the guests prefer gossip to serious discussion. There are even some holdovers from the Duke of Omnium's day. Mr. Evesham, the veteran Tory politician who befriends young Richard Remington in *The New Machiavelli*, is a man not unlike the Duke himself, although less shy and less obsessed with personal honor.

Aside from politics, another obvious difference between the world of Richard Remington and that of Phineas Finn and the Duke of Omnium is the much franker attitude toward sex. Although a sex scandal is still capable of ruining a promising politician, as it does Remington in *The New Machiavelli*, and almost ruined Phineas Finn in one of Trollope's political novels, the subject is now discussed openly and the word itself is used, as it never was at the height of the Victorian era. Freudian psychology, which contends that all emotional troubles are at bottom sexual, was beginning to interest laymen when Wells was writing, and the taboos against referring to or talking about the sexual drives of men and women were being lifted.

Closely associated with the lifting of the sex taboos was the feminist movement, which is an important feature of *The New Machiavelli* as well as of *Ann Veronica*. Like the latter, the plot time of *The New Machiavelli* coincides with the campaign of the militant suffragettes for political and legal reforms advantageous to women. Young women of the upper social classes were no longer satisfied merely to be companions of their husbands, and possibly society hostesses, but insisted on a share in active political life. They wanted to take part in political campaigns, to sit in municipal councils and Parliament, and even to hold office, as well as to speak and write about politics.

Some feminists were more advanced than others. Margaret Remington, Richard's wife, is a unicersity graduate but her image of her social and intellectual role is quite conservative. Like the Duchess of Omnium, she believes that it is her duty to create an environment in which her husband can [illegible]. The woman, she feels, must reflect the man's glory. Like Margaret, Altiora Bailey is not an outspoken feminist, but she is her husband's full partner in their social investigations. Like the real Beatrice Webb, upon whom she is modeled, Altiora is seen as the more aggressive member of the husband-wife team. Finally, toward the left of the feminist movement--but not as far left as *Ann Veronica's* shrewish Kitty Brett--is Isabel Rivers, Richard's mistress, who sees herself as a New Woman. Isabel is convinced that she is the complete intellectual equal of any man, that she must share her man's trials and triumphs (and disgraces), and refuses to be put on a pedestal of frailty and purity as Victorian women had been.

Lastly, religion. We have moved a long step beyond the position of The Way of All Flesh's Ernest Pontifex and Mr. Overton, men who were skeptical of conventional religious faith and --in the tradition of Voltaire and the Deists--ridiculed what they believed to be the fallacies and foibles of organized religion. Remington's mother was an old-fashioned dogmatic Protestant, less upset over the death of her husband than the fact that he was killed while working on Sunday. Turning against this dedicated but narrow set of values, Remington simply rejects religion altogether.

Remington is an atheist whose faith, insofar as he has one, is in science, the conviction--exploded since his time--that all human problems can be solved by the application of reason and scientific method. His own sexual dilemma, about which he is anything but reasonable, is proof of the naivety of such confidence.

If he had been questioned about it, Remington surely would have responded that in a healthy society, man's instinctive drives and human nature itself would be decently and properly regulated by the state. We can readily see, in Remington's thought, the embryo of subsequent Fascist and Communist ideology, the official doctrines and practices of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. The officialdom of these regimes have implemented many of the ideas that socialist intellectuals toyed with seventy or eighty years ago.

PART V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.

This bibliography contains titles of works likely to be helpful to teachers offering a course in nineteenth century British history using contemporary fiction.

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PART VI. TWENTY MORE NOVELS.

These novels are recommended as additions to, or substitutes for, the ones used in the model course.

Arnold Bennett, The Old Wives' Tale (1908). Contrasts the lives of sisters raised in provincial England in the middle of the nineteenth century, one of whom remains there and lives a drab life while the other pursues a bohemian life style in Paris under the Second Empire.

Arnold Bennett, Clayhanger (1910). This semi-autobiographical novel depicts the Nonconformist lower middle class of provincial England and furnishes many details about the attitudes and traits of this class during the late nineteenth century.

Mary Cholmondley, Red Pottage (1899). A melodramatic novel satirizing the nouveaux riches and Anglican ritualism.

Charles Dickens, Nicholas Nickleby (1839). This novel, noted for its exposure of conditions in bad private schools, also comments satirically on the worlds of business and the professional theater during the early Victorian period.

Charles Dickens, Bleak House (1853). Celebrated for its exposure of the problems of unwed mothers and litigants in interminable judicial cases.

Benjamin Disraeli, Coningsby (1844). A novel about the conflict between young political reformers and shrewd, worldly members of the Establishment. It is a thinly disguised narrative of the actual politics of the early 1840s, in which many prominent figures can be identified.

Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil (1845). Vividly depicts the gulf between social classes in early Victorian Britain.

George Eliot, Adam Bede (1859). A novel about Methodism, illegitimacy, murder, and the judicial punishment of transportation.

George Eliot, Silas Marner (1861). This famous novel casts light upon working class life, particularly on skilled workers made redundant by technological change.

George Eliot, Felix Holt (1866). Deals with political idealism and working class radicalism at the time of the Great Reform Bill.

E.M. Forster, Howards End (1921). An exciting novel about class warfare, property rights, and a quarrel over a legacy, by a member of the last Victorian generation.

Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke (1850). A novel of London's "sweated labor" industries, and a sympathetic study of a slum-born poet-tailor who becomes a Chartist reformer.

Charles Kingsley, Yeast (1851). Illustrates the seething discontent among England's maltreated farm laborers.

George Meredith, Beauchamp's Career (1876). An excellent novel of mid-Victorian Radical politics.

George Moore, Esther Waters (1894). A poignant novel about a working class woman, with sidelights upon such Victorian institutions as racing, gambling, and the "pub."

Charles Reade, Hard Cash (1863). This propagandistic novel exposes the revolting conditions in Victorian insane asylums.

Charles Reade, Put Yourself in His Place (1870). Deals with the labor question, trade unions, and philanthropy.

Anthony Trollope, Phineas Finn (1869). Another of Trollope's classic political novels, this time about the misadventures of an Irish M.P.

Mary Augusta Ward, Robert Elsmere (1885). The story of a Victorian clergyman who loses his faith, this novel takes up many late nineteenth century religious and ethical issues.

H.G. Wells, Tono-Bungay (1909). The chicanery of the early twentieth century business and advertising worlds is amusingly divulged in this novel about an eccentric who becomes very rich after inventing a patent medicine.